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ABSTRACT

This handbook, designed to accompany the anthology of the same name, contains: (1) a questionnaire to evaluate a student's exposure to the stories, and the insights acquired or developed by the student, which have relevance to his or her bilingual/multicultural background; (2) a self-evaluation check-list for the teacher of the short story; (3) "In the Workshop of Time and Tide," by N.V.M. Gonzalez, a brief introduction to the Filipino storyteller's art in general and the Philippine short story in particular; (4) "The Brother, the Grandfather, and the Maid: Three Readings," and an explication of them, intended to serve as models of what a teacher can do to further the development of the student's discovery skills through the study of fiction; and (5) study guides for the 18 stories in the student's anthology. (Author/AMH)

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Teacher's Handbook

THE WELL OF TIME

Compiled by Teresito M. Laygo
With critical essays, notes and study guides
by N. V. M. Gonzalez

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To The Teacher

In the Filipino Bilingual/Multicultural Education Program it is our aim to provide the student with some background material in Philippine culture on which to build his knowledge of himself as he broadens his education through further schooling about a cultural environment with which he is unfamiliar by reason of birth or from which he is separated.

A common, if not popular, method of providing the student with so-called cultural experiences of this nature is by resorting to the use of music and dance, cooking and attire. An entirely different kind of cultural experience is offered by literature — by prose and verse, by stories and poems. In the present instance, we have gathered together a group of Philippine short stories by various writers. The notes that accompany them have been especially written to indicate the place that the storyteller, as a Filipino, occupies in his people's culture.

The stories provide as near a life-like representation of experience as written language is capable of. Hence, the reader is given as close an exposure to experience — in this instance, Philippine life — as is possible through language and the genre of the short story. The notes and study guides endeavor to bring the material as meaningfully as possible to the average student.

This meaningfulness is not something that is easy to label or tag, or even to describe; and this is a consideration which must never be overlooked if pedantry is to be avoided. As a student advances in his experience of literature, much in the same way that he is exposed to the day-to-day actuality in an urban or rural setting, the ability to perceive the meaningfulness of what happens in terms of people and places, is an important asset in his progress towards maturity. The student in a bilingual/multicultural environment is not aided when, in the classroom, the material offered to him in textbooks, and which is touted as meaningful, is, in reality unfamiliar if not entirely alien. Such reading could in fact be harmful; it is better encountered by the student at a later date. At the initial stages of his introduction to literature, familiar scenes and identifiable voices are his best allies in the battle for a comfortable level of literacy. We have therefore prepared this gathering of stories for students with a Philippine background precisely to utilize his cultural identity as a weapon for advancement instead of a crutch.

Art forms have been amongst Man's most useful tools toward meaningfulness; and narrative — which presents a tangible beginning, middle, and end in a time-frame — is a

classic example of meaning in terms of linear structure. The short story, as an art form, is especially valuable as a teaching tool in that, being the particular kind of narrative that it is, it is one type whose every detail or scene, whose characters and their gestures and speech, contribute in purposive and inevitable ways to the achievement of meaning. The short story's brevity, furthermore, encourages analysis and classroom discussion; in the typically short class-hour available, much can be accomplished especially if the short story is regarded as a whole and as an organized and unified structure. The emotion that is generated by the story is, for this reason, an experience that is uniquely unified. Study and analysis soon enough will yield the components that make up that unity. Those elements will be identifiable (in terms of subject, theme, plot, focus, etc., for example) but each item will be seen to be inscrutably involved with the others, and the compellingly inevitable result is a unified impression on the reader.

It must be understood, however, that the reader may be unaware of all this happening. He may quite simply feel it and be unable to describe the experience altogether. At the same time, there are readers who, for some reason or other, may not even attain such response. Generally speaking, the reader of fiction has such a wide range of pleasure available to him that a small portion of it seems, more often than not, to readily meet his needs for the moment. To speak then of the cultivated reader is to have in mind that person who has trained himself, or who has been trained, to meet the challenge of the printed page before him. For the unified impression that the writer of stories provides us is never the work of instinct but rather the by-product of application. The teacher of literature leads the way toward the area of meaning where the author has staked out a claim; the student then comes to the unfamiliar place in faith and good will. Thereafter, teacher and student explore, hand in hand, the domain of the writer. The stories in this book offer many such excursions. Read with alertness, they might have any number of surprises for both explorers.

The essays that accompany these stories have a three-fold purpose. They provide a survey of the art of the narrative in Philippine terms, offer a critical entry into the delicate area of fiction and the fictional world, and provide samples of structured experiences which three Philippine stories particularly offer. They are, however, especially intended for the teacher. The discussion anticipates critical approaches which, if unfamiliar to some, will probably be in much use in the future owing to the thrust which advanced critical thinking has been making.

To evaluate a student's exposure to the stories, and the insights acquired or developed by him which have relevance to his bilingual/multicultural background, we have prepared the questionnaire that follows. Each section has been designed to cover a specific aspect of the student's reading experience, i.e., to his awareness of ethnic relevance, of formal artistic values, empathy, and thematic or conceptual response.

I

1. Do you recognize the setting of the story? No/Yes
   Have you been to a similar place? No/Yes
   Can the events of this story occur in a different country? No/Yes
2. Do you know people in actual life similar to those in the story? No/Yes
   Is their behavior understandable to you? No/Yes
   If you were of a different ethnic background, or came from a different country, would you understand the behavior of the characters in this story? No/Yes
3. Determine what the story you have just read is all about and then express your idea of it in one sentence. Is this idea acceptable to you? No/Yes

These questions test the student's awareness of ethnic relevance of the material read. A score of 70% indicates satisfactory perceptiveness; 80% means usual, or ordinary; and 90% to 100% means acute or extraordinary perceptiveness.

II

Think back on the story just read and answer the following:

1. Did you expect more to happen? No/Yes
2. Were you made happy/sad over what happened? No/Yes
3. Did you care about what happened to the character or characters in the story? No/Yes
4. Can you imagine another scene or two to add to the story? No/Yes
5. Would such addition be desirable or necessary? No/Yes

Give each item a value of 20%. A score of 60% means that the student has a perception of the story form, of formal values; 80% a better-than-average perception; and 100%, an acute perception of form.

III

1. Did you feel you were involved in the story either as a participant or as an observer? No/Yes
2. Did the story disturb or upset you in any way? No/Yes
3. Will you perhaps remember this story in the future? No/Yes
4. Do you recall another story like this one? No/Yes
5. Have you had an experience in any way similar to this one? No/Yes

Give each item a value of 20%. A score of 60% means that the student has a developed sense of empathy; 80%, a better-than-average one; and 100%, a satisfactory sense of empathy.

IV

1. Has the reading of this story been useful to you in some way? No/Yes
2. Can you say you got "something" from it? No/Yes
3. Can you apply what you have learned, if anything, in your daily life? No/Yes
4. Will you urge a friend to read the story to learn from it in some way or other? No/Yes
5. Do you think you might refer to this story in the future to illustrate an idea, a concept or an attitude? No/Yes

Give each item a rating of 20%. A score of 60% means that the student posseses a normal conceptual reaction to the reading experience; 80%, a better-than-satisfactory conceptual reaction; and 100%, an extraordinary conceptual reaction.

A SELF-EVALUATION CHECK-LIST
for the teacher of the short story

The following is a self-evaluation check-list for the teacher of the short story. The area covered includes his command of standard approaches to literature, and the vocabulary of the criticism of fiction, and his awareness of literary values for exposition at the classroom level. Needless to say, the check-list requires strict estimates of one's abilities if it is to be helpful.

1. I can write a three-sentence definition of the following:
   - a) imagination No/Yes
   - b) literature No/Yes
   - c) fiction No/Yes
   - d) verse No/Yes
   - e) drama No/Yes
   - f) poetry No/Yes
   - g) essay No/Yes
   - h) prose No/Yes
   - i) fancy No/Yes
   - j) fantasy No/Yes

Each item rates 10 points; a score of 70 is a low pass; 80% means competent. The same evaluation is used in what follows:

2. I am familiar with the following names in the literature of the short story:
   - a) Anton Chekhov No/Yes
   - b) Katherine Mansfield No/Yes
   - c) Katherine Anne Porter No/Yes
   - d) Edward J. O'Brien No/Yes
   - e) Edgar Allan Poe No/Yes
   - f) Wilbur Daniel Steele No/Yes
   - g) Lu Hsun No/Yes
   - h) Maxim Gorky No/Yes
   - i) Ernest Hemingway No/Yes
   - j) William Carlos Williams No/Yes

3. Given a piece of fiction (for example, the story I have just assigned to my class), I am prepared to make statements about its:
   - a) plot No/Yes
   - b) characterization No/Yes
   - c) dialog No/Yes

d) point of view No/Yes
e) tone No/Yes
f) mood No/Yes
g) point of illumination No/Yes
h) symbolism No/Yes
i) atmosphere No/Yes
j) milieu No/Yes

4. I can compose a paragraph discussing any of the following:
a) Style is the man. No/Yes
b) Fiction is a slice of life. No/Yes
c) Life is stranger than fiction. No/Yes
d) A story is completed only in the reader's mind. No/Yes
e) A good story is true to life. No/Yes

5. The following statements reveal my reading preferences:
a) I like stories with happy endings. No/Yes
b) I prefer suspense to characterization. No/Yes
c) All fictional characters embody ideas. No/Yes
d) I dislike stories with a "hanging" ending. No/Yes
e) The shorter they are the better. No/Yes

Items 4 & 5 may be treated as one unit: the total possible score, 100. In any case, a 70% total score is a low pass, and 80% means competent.

In the Workshop of Time and Tide

A brief introduction to the Filipino storyteller's art in general and the Philippine short story in particular.

In The Workshop of Time and Tide

I

"Is it a tale of the wars?"

"No," was the reply. "(But) I shall tell you something I saw, or rather something (that) I did not see, this afternoon."

This curious exchange comes from a little known story by Mariano Pascual which perhaps holds a key to an understanding of Philippine literature and, particularly, of the short story in both Pilipino and English. "The Major's Story," as Mr. Pascual's narrative is called, is in Jose Garcia Villa's *Best Philippine Short Stories 1928*, a pioneer anthology of the Philippine practice of this genre, published by *Philippines Free Press*, itself a pioneer in the promotion and development of Filipino letters in general. The Philippines was in those days a frontier of sorts, although hardly the badlands of literature.

The subject and perhaps the rendering of that literature is symbolically given in "The Major's Story." It concerns a party where a number of girls succeed in persuading one of the many guests, in this instance, the Major, to liven up the occasion with some amusing anecdote.

Our Major obliges; he tells the girls about an incident of no particular significance other than that he could vouch for it. He was on his way home one afternoon, he says, when he spotted a crowd gathering at Colgante Bridge. This was the footbridge over the river Pasig. The crowd, says the Major, included a number of students, two Chinese peddlers, a Spaniard with a little child by his side, some half dozen Yankee sailors, three women in black who had just come from nearby Quiapo Church, and two laborers carrying a shrieking pig. Soon enough two policemen appeared, one from the north, the other from the south. It was humanity on a small scale. And what was attracting all that attention? A drowned person? A wreck? Someone doing a stunt in the water below?

"The man beside me began it all," the Major tells the girls as soon as he senses that he cannot hold them in suspense much longer. "He had nothing to do, and to kill time he watched the water as it flowed into the sea. People saw him looking into the water, and, being curious, followed him as people will always do."

As an explanation this is plausible enough. But the thoughtful reader might find the Filipino writer in the episode. For the ceaseless flow of the Pasig is what Filipino literature would be all about. At any point in time, one could ask the question, "What, indeed, does the crowd see?"

Writing some forty years later, Francisco Arcellana offered a synthesis of what till then our symbolic Pasig, through time and tide, has offered the observer:

> . . . Wall Street crashed in 1929. What did that mean for us in 1930? Men jumping out of windows of skyscrapers . . . There was a depression in America. The dole, headlines, the hordes of the unemployed. The Philippines became a commonwealth. Japan invaded Asia. There was a civil war in Spain. The International Eucharistic Congress met in Manila. Italy invaded Ethiopia. The Filipino writer was told to leave his ivory tower. He was told to stay there. They read proletarian literature. They wrote proletarian literature. They debated whether to scab or join the picket line. Germany invaded Poland. And the world that we thought was without end began to end.[1]

Eventually, Colgante Bridge was dismantled and junked. The river Pasig, of course, has remained — although perhaps a bit murkier than before. But for as long as it flows there will be stories to tell, and Filipino writers will be writing them for whoever might care to read, wherever that audience might be.

II

It is not often remembered that the printing press reached the Philippines as early as the last decade of the sixteenth century and that by 1610, a Filipino printer Tomas Pinpin had produced a primer for the learning of the Spanish language. The first known published poem in Tagalog is said to have appeared in 1605. It took almost a hundred years, however, before *Pasyon ni Hesukristong Panginoon (The Passion of the Lord Jesus Christ)*, by Gaspar Aquino de Belen, was printed. Fifty more years were to pass before the emergence of Jose de la Cruz (1746-1829), better known as Huseng Sisiw, who is credited with having written the first verses that dealt with lay, rather than religious, themes. Finally came Balagtas (1788-1862) and his *Florante at Laura* (1838)

> . . . bunga ng pagtatagpo ng tradisyong katutubo at ng impluwensiyang banyaga, at karapatdapat tanghaling hiyas ng panulaang Tagalog ng panahon ng kolonyalismong Español.[2]
>
> (. . . an outcome of the contact of the native tradition with foreign influences, and [a work which we] must duly esteem as the jewel of Tagalog poetry during the Spanish regime.)

There is more to all those years, of course, than that which might come under "foreign influences." True, the bulk of the formal literature of the period (to distinguish it from the oral) would seem, whether in song or narrative verse, to be mere borrowings from abroad. These were known as the *awit* and *corrido*,[3] the verse forms into which the Filipino poet cast the medieval romances and adventure stories that reached him. The material had spilled over from Europe; in Filipino containers they were to remain

available for over two hundred years. If early Filipino literature is to be understood, scholars could pay close attention to the *awit* and *corrido* with profit.

To the undiscerning, our earliest writers seemed unoriginal and limited their efforts to refurbishing stories from European lore. Here were episodes from Spanish chivalric literature and from the Arthurian and Carolingian legends, anecdotes from Portuguese and Italian history latched on to incidents from Czech or Persian folklore.

> These stories about queens, princesses and princes, knights, dukes, and counts who lived in a wonderful world of romance where the good were always rewarded and the wicked punished, and where God, the Virgin, and the saints communicated frequently with men through angels and heavenly voices, or even came down to help the heroes and heroines in need, captivated the imagination of a people who as yet knew very little of the outside world. These romances provided a temporary release from the harsh realities of existence. They were, moreover, the only reading matter that the masses could safely enjoy during a period of strict political and literary censorship.[4]

Some fifty of those stories have come down to us, and in a study by Professor Damiana Ligon Eugenio are analyses and commentaries on both the verse forms and their European analogues. It is research of this kind that might help revise, in the future, the attitude of contemporary scholars toward this portion of the national heritage. Summarily dismissed by some writers as embarrassing beginnings of a national literature, the *awit* and *corrido* are, in fact, a mirror upon which the culture of their day is truly reflected. An amazing grasp by the Tagalog mind of the fundamentals of literary art is imaged in them, for example, and it is something to admire.

It was not unusual for the *awit* and *corrido* writers to exhibit a disarming humility toward their art; this was exceeded only by their abiding respect for their audience. The romance, *Salita at Buhay na Pinagdaanan nang Haring Asuero, ni Doña Maria, at ni Juan Pobre sa Bayang Herusalem,* a work of some four hundred and seventy-five quatrians of unknown authorship is perhaps typical. The story, according to Professor Eugenio, has analogues in the folklore of Italy, France, and Czechoslovakia. The author begins with a formulaic invocation:

> Oh God, Lord all Powerful,
> Who made and created the whole universe,
> Help now my lips and my tongue
> To be able to narrate an exemplum.
>
> And all you saints and angels,
> Comrades of God the King of Heaven,
> Bestow grace on my feeble mind
> That I may not err in what I shall say.

Distinguished audience, what can I
Say and declare?
Wherever I look and fix my gaze
I see that all of you are persons of quality.

But be it so, distinguished one,
I shall begin my story:
If perchance I omit anything,
Let your better judgement supply the deficiency.[5]

This appeal to the better judgment of the "distinguished ones" is what today's entertainers might call "audience participation;" the feature, in any case, placed the versifier in direct contact with his public. What he called the *awit* required twelve-syllable lines; the *corrido*, eight-syllable lines. He worked with quatrains, observing no particular preferences as to which subjects required the *awit* or which demanded the *corrido* form. He might have initially recited his narratives himself; but they were later to see print anyhow, and were obtainable at "sidewalk stalls and brought to the remote barrios by itinerant peddlers."[6] Their popularity was undeniable. Translations appeared and these may have helped immeasurably, in the early development of provincial languages like Hiligaynon and Ilocano, for example, to establish the conventions of grammar and rhetoric so necessary for growth.

The tradition of humble authorship did not, of course, discourage later writers from affixing their signatures to their work. Initials were at times used as the closing quatrain, and with some shrewdness, so as to avoid blunting sentiment for the sake of rhyme. Between veracity to the known turns of a given story and the act of rendering it in some way or other, the latter seemed to have greater value. Thus, in *Proceso*, we find the following subtitle:

> The Life of the Merchant Proceso, and his daughter Maria, in the Kingdom of Hungary, which was derived from a *Cuadro Histórico*, and most laboriously versified by one who is just beginning to write in the common pastime of the Tagalogs.[7]

Francisco Baltazar came from this tradition. Some twelve works have been credited to him; of these only *Florante at Laura*, however, appears to have survived. His predecessor, Huseng Sisiw, is remembered today for *Historia Famosa ni Bernardo Carpio, Doce Pares, Rodrigo de Villa* and others. In Dr. Eugenio's study, only fifteen authors, Balagtas and Huseng Sisiw among them, have their writings fairly well authenticated.

There are probably two hundred of these *awit* and *corrido*, according to Professor Eugenio. Earlier scholars, notably Epifanio de los Santos, have left musical scores of a few *awit* samples. Whatever further study might suggest, it seems clear that the roots of the Filipino story-teller's art are in this material.

Song, for one thing, is central to the vocabulary of that art. Read as one of the last

scenes of Jose Rizal's recorded life, his valedictory poem, "Mi Último Adiós," is not lyrical in quality by mere coincidence.[8] Similarly, before the final curtain in Nick Joaquin's *A Portrait of the Artist as Filipino*, we see

> Bitoy (speaking exultantly through the sound of bells and music): October in Manila! . . . The month when, back in our childhood, the very air turned festive and the Circus came to town and the old Opera House!
>
> *(The lights die out inside the stage; the sound of bells and music fades off. The ruins stand out distinctly.)*
>
> Oh Paula, Candida — listen to me! By your dust, and by the dust of all the generations, I promise to continue, I promise to persevere!
>
> The jungle may advance, the bombs may fall again — but while I live, you live — and this dear city of our affections shall rise again — if only in my song! To remember and to sing: that is my vocation. . . .[9]

And then, though quite on a different track, we have confirmation from the short story writers of the same phenomenon.

> "Was she afraid of Labang?" My father had not raised his voice, but the room seemed to resound with it. And again I saw her eyes on the long curving horns and the arm of my brother Leon around her shoulders.
>
> "No, Father, she was not afraid."
> "On the way — "
> "She looked at the stars, Father. And Manong Leon sang."
> "What did he sing?"
> " 'Sky Sown with Stars.' She sang with him."[10]

This is from Arguilla's "How My Brother Leon Brought Home a Wife." In J. C. Tuvera's "Ceremony," it appears in somewhat cryptic form but is at the heart of the story:

> "I hate it all here," he said. "In this house. And I can't bear to see you leave again."
>
> In a rush the words tumbled from her. "I know," she said. "I know." Then abruptly she bent and touched her lips to his face, in the moment when a spurt of song heaved afresh from the night, and then sobbing she fled swiftly from the room.[11]

III

Art does not copy life but rather illuminates it by offering for our enjoyment a semblance of life. And the Filipino story-teller has done well enough in this, as the record of his first hundred and fifty years of apprenticeship shows. Hardly can one fault him for being unengaging; and judging from the *awit* and *corrido* that have come down to us, he had

in fact an intuitive grasp of his role in society.

Competing and authoritative cultures, such as that which informed the civil regime under Spain and the friarocracy that went with it, were never out of the Filipino artist's way. His experience in those years demonstrates what John Dewey was to insist upon as a characteristic of art, namely, its ability to cope with seemingly obstructive matters. In the practice of the *awit* and *corrido* writers, invention and a whole-souled affection for the Tagalog language were the tools used to minimize barriers of communication.

Students of the culture, since Father Pedro Chirino's *Relación de las Islas Filipinas* of 1604, have been happily astounded by that richness even before the advent of the verse-narrative writers. When the folklore of the world, and particularly that of Europe, became available to the Filipino, the artist in the national community did not appear to require instruction on how to deal with the material; the genius of the race, as it were, took over. We might remember that the long years under Spain were not spectacular for the achievements of that regime in mass education. The authorities undoubtedly saw in the verse-writer an ally, and here commenced the tension in the Filipino experience between art and society.

In dismissing the *awit* and *corrido* portion of the national heritage, as some have done, and in relegating this to the heap of unsavory by-products of friarocracy, the banal and uninventive in the Filipino character have been exaggerated. This is unfair to the Filipino artistic sensibility since it was after all very much in control, starting from the years of its formal apprenticeship. Those pious invocations and shy clues to authorship are proofs of this.

They served, to begin with, to dissociate from the art the particulars that story-teller and audience shared and recognized as the nitty-gritty of lived life. They were the story-teller's signals that a narrative was forthcoming and with it a burden of myth and riddle, of fable, some vision of life. And those ritual signatures had a similar, if opposite, purpose. They were meant to restore the audience to the lived life, to the actuality that had been disturbed, or that had been temporarily abandoned for the story's sake.[12] Audience and story-teller both enjoyed a secret, moreover: that the material really belonged to popular history or lore.

The audience knew that the story-teller's boarding house reach had come up with something for it to share. Painters experience how the quality of sunlight and the nature of shadows in the country where one has chosen to do one's work — say, Italy — influence an artist's development, his style and methods. With the twelve- or eight-syllable line and the alliteration and assonance in Tagalog, the *awit* and *corrido* writers worked diligently, as it were, with their brush, delighting in simply letting themselves be of their time and place. They were earlier Fernando Amorsolos, discovering their sun-drenched tropical landscape.

The Eugenio study observes that there have been *awit* and *corrido* structures that

reached from four to more than five thousand lines. Considering the moralistic themes that weighted them, it was remarkable how they did not disenchant the listener or reader but continued instead to hold and win him. We must go to the archetypal nature of those borrowed stories to understand this. For those romances were no mere "histories" or "lives;" they were not topical episodes of adventure. They were, in fact, inherited "deposits" of experience, "banked" answers to life's riddles, motifs of initiations and discoveries. Our *awit* and *corrido* writers could not have escaped them, for the imagination and its power to put experience in order would have demanded the performance of them. To our early loss we did not see this intuitive use that our earliest workers in the field of the imagination did indeed make of those archetypal images that were as accessible in their day as they are of course in ours.

IV

Those archetypes are, as they seem to have always been, informed by that shaping or ordering force. To be aware of this, one has only to recall the tale of the *adarna* — of the sick father who had three sons, and who wanted a magic bird brought to his bedside so that he might be well again.[13] Or consider Balagtas' *Florante at Laura*[14] and its motifs of justice and honor. That political satire has been read into it derives from this archetypal mold that found a particularly revealing parallel in the social reality of Balagtas' time.

John M. Echols has called *Florante at Laura* an "early precursor of the writings of supporters of independence"[15] — an apt description, since by this time writers had indeed their fingers on the pulse of the nation. By the middle of the 19th century the most important writings were in Spanish, and "the internationally renowned representative of this period," Echols goes further, "is Jose Rizal, whose novels, *Noli Me Tangere (The Lost Eden)* and *El Filibusterismo (The Subversive)* helped to spark the struggle for independence from Spain . . . His works were ultimately to help bring about his execution before a Spanish firing squad. . . ."[16] We might recall, in this connection, the last work to come from Rizal's pen, mention of which was made earlier: "Mi Ultimo Adios" ("My Last Farewell"). It might have been the song of the mythic *adarna* bird; for such is the way of archetypes.[17]

Such synoptic remarks by disinterested observers like Professor Echols enable us to recognize the direction that Philippine literature has taken. "Writing in Spanish," he tells us in an all-too-brief note on Rizal, "has not reached such heights."[18] We should not indeed forget that, especially toward the last decades of the 19th century, a rising awareness concerning the conditions in the country demanded expression. Spanish, rather than Tagalog, which Huseng Sisiw and Balagtas raised to great levels in their day, was held to be the best medium at this time. Spanish would guarantee access to the ruling elite. Reason and emotion could be appealed to wherever intelligent men might be found. And it is in this context that Rizal's novels acquire a perennial interest. His

choice of language was an act of sacrifice; his choice of audience, an expression of idealism. Both sacrifice and idealism were to be reevaluated by another generation, the accruing irony notwithstanding.

At this point in the national literary history, though, Rizal's artistic act has a special meaning. It was an extension of Balagtas' art and personal response on the novelist's part to yet another European literary convention. Had Rizal followed Balagtas' lead in the use of Tagalog, he might have been held down by the *awit* and *corrido* tradition. The fact is that he turned in another direction. He mapped out a new geography for the literature of his country, indicating the procedures appropriate to the exploration of that territory. Three generations of intellectuals were to go into the terrain, at times flamboyantly flashing their travel documents but only to fail as transients or even as protracted sojourners owing to their being unable to distinguish, it would seem, between travel and residence, between the merely naturalized and the native-born.

Rizal's successes derive from his having been a true son of his tradition. Consider his use of the novel form. The *awit* and *corrido*, as analogies of the European realistic novel, created a level of rhyme and measure appropriate to a semblance of human experience of archetypal force and blocked off the particular realities of the day. Rizal did likewise, using Spanish and the novel form, the latter already much employed in Europe. He achieved much the same effect as did the *awit* or *corrido* writer in terms of creating a virtual world where ideals could be particularized. It was as if he knew all along that his predecessors in the craft of the narrative had drawn enough from the fables of Europe; now it was his turn to tell a tale of a Europe transplanted. Here was his necessary subject; both the convention he chose and his tradition required it. The earlier *corrido* had rendered glosses on the subject of justice; the *awit* had lyricized over it. Now he would probe for its truth. Convention laid out the tolls of realism on the service-tray before him. In place of the twelve- and eight- syllable lines, which were the verse-marker's bid for immediacy, he would turn to the resources of scene, dialogue, characterization, of persona and tone — devices already pressed into service by Perez Galdós (1843-1920), Dumas (1802-1870), Hugo (1802-1885), and Flaubert (1821-1880).

The popularity of the *awit* and *corrido* among the common people and their heavy burden of pious material must have concealed, for Rizal's younger brothers, the profound artistic advance that has been achieved and possibly the creative resources of the national past as well. Rizal, for his part, had the genius not to miss anything. It therefore became necessary for late comers to make new discoveries. But the complex role in the national culture that Rizal and his work played concealed the purely artistic facet of his legacy, obscuring leads that could help the diligent and the humble. With the advent of the American regime, a perturbed sensibility began to look about, anxious for indications of roots or beginnings, only to stumble into false starts and ludicrous posturings in hopes of pressing the Filipino experience into acceptable forms. In some cases, as we shall later see, the acceptable meant the vendable. Moreover, events moved at much too fast a clip. Before a freshly remembered event was released from memory and could be articulated, a new one thrust itself forward to overwhelm the

mind and trample upon the spirit. The short story in both Filipino and English offered relief from this cultural mutilation.

V

The short story in Pilipino has a less elaborate history than it its counterpart in English, although not necessarily a less eventful one. It is unfortunate that the schoolbook trade, like a curse, has encouraged the easy designation of styles and themes and the listing of writers and titles of stories as alternatives to defining the forces that beleaguered the writer and diminished his art. Our account here cannot serve to supply what years of diligent critical attention could have provided. We can only sketch in an idea: the dedicated involvement by some writers and the enthusiastic, if chancy, support by institutions and groups, so that the appearance of the short story in Pilipino, all told, might be recognized as a milestone in the journey of the Filipino toward artistic expression.

What we call *maikling katha* — a short literary composition — could not be anything but new in the literature, considering its formal beginnings in the *awit* and *corrido* tradition. The form derives from the *dagli*, brief sketches that Lope K. Santos and his associates published in *Muling Pagsilang* in the twenties. The *salaysay*, or narration, had already been cultivated as well. It may well be that when the *salaysay* acquired a thematic thrust the *dagli* came into being. For one thing, length had lost its appeal; and reading matter that could be sold at the patio of Quiapo Church, alongside votive candles in the shape of hearts and crosses, were now things of the past. No doubt, the Revolution of 1896 and the Philippine-American War, which extended to 1904, were more than sufficient explanations for the change of taste in the images of the lived life. What was sought after was entertainment and instruction for the new age. This was the direction of many a publication or journal of the period, and a typical one was *Ang Mithi*. In a literary competition in 1910 sponsored by this magazine, the story "Elias" by Rosauro Almario won first prize, setting a trend in fiction contests.

In 1920, Cirio Panganiban's "Bunga ng Kasalanan" ("The Fruit of Sin") earned the title "Katha ng Taon," ("Story of the Year") in a contest sponsored by *Taliba*. A. G. Abadilla credits Panganiban with having introduced "plot" *(ang banghay)* to the *dagli* or *salaysay*.[19] The "orderly arrangement of events, as a function and feature of the literary composition" *(maayos na pagkakatagni-tagni ng mga nangyari, bilang sangkap at haligi ng katha)* was, according to Abadilla, something of a discovery to this generation.

This was an underestimation of the earlier narrative tradition; for the *awit* and *corrido* writers were, of course, no strangers to it. What the new writers did manage was a practical use for plot. Whereas their verse-writing predecessors employed plot to mount some tendentious moralizing, the new writers used it to enhance narrative interest, to promote rewards like suspense and surprise. The new writers soon enough slipped into

sentimentality abetted by the lurid prose that had become, alas, the hallmark of popular reading.

And what were their stories about? Abadilla describes their core as follows: ". . . *ang nakayukayok na kalungkutan, ang inaglahing pag-ibig ng isang mahirap lalo na, ang mga daliring hubogkandila, ang baywang-hantik ng pinaparaluman, at anu-ano pang bunga ng mga kabiglawang pandamdamin at pangkaisipan*. . . ."[20] (. . . crushing sorrows, the spurned love of a poor suitor in particular, fingers as shapely as candles, the beloved's waist like that of an ant's, and all sorts of adolescent emotions and thoughts. . . .") It was altogether an odd image of life, but it was not without admirers.

A readership developed for it in *Liwayway*, a weekly that very early stood for popular writing in Tagalog. It was in *Liwayway's* pages that the work of the members of the new school almost exclusively appeared. Other weeklies were soon launched and for the first time the writer as a Filipino (working in what today is called Pilipino but which then was essentially the Tagalog of Manila and vicinity) became aware that one could make a living professionally at being a man of letters. Indeed, this was possible through writing fiction, as a craftsman in the language of one's own race.

By 1927, the *maikling katha* was ready for some official accounting. Precisely for this purpose Clodualdo del Mundo initiated his lists of the best stories published in the magazines. For nine years he stood watch. Writers were observed to compose their work with more care than before in hopes of making the del Mundo roll of honor, the *Parolang Ginto* (The Golden Lantern).

Another critical observer joined in — Alejandro G. Abadilla, who, earlier, had earned a reputation for his poetry. Inaugurated in 1932, Abadilla's *Talaang Bughaw* (The Blue List) exerted pressure on contributors to the popular weeklies and college publications alike. Here was a critic who was keen on craft and willing over the years to keep running skirmishes with those writers gleefully unconcerned with technique.

The practitioners of the *maikling katha* had much to thank the Abadilla and del Mundo leadership for. In due course, however, the Tagalog scene became polarized. A sharp division between *Liwayway* writers — who were now the old school — and the young blood was all too discernible by 1935, the year of the participation of the academy in the national literary dialogue. For it was then that the National Teachers College offered the use of its facilities for seminars and debates on Tagalog literary issues. The dialogue tended toward dismantling what appeared to be a strong literary fort manned by members of the *Liwayway* camp and their supporters from the staff of similarly minded magazines. The new writers, unable to publish readily in the popular press, were not without ingenuity and enterprise. In the following year, the first anthology of the short story in Tagalog appeared, *Mga Kuwentong Ginto (Golden Tales)*, edited by A. G. Abadilla and C. del Mundo.[21]

The collection contained twenty stories and covered the period from 1925 to 1935.

Here the Pilipino term for "short story" seems to have appeared for the first time. The anthologists defined the form as best they could. Quite apart from the many stories that are already short, they observed, the *maikling katha* are those that are a class by themselves owing to the attentive regard on the part of their authors for meaning and structure. Each story in *Mga Kuwentong Ginto* could come close, in the estimation of the editors, to what might be called the *sining ng maikling katha* (the art of the short story).

All this had a beneficial effect, as reflected in the work by new writers, many of them still college undergraduates. And from here on the short story in Pilipino became an open arena for protracted contest between two groups, the old and the young. To the first belonged those committed to the standards set by *Liwayway* and like publications whose survival meant their catering to a large but undiscriminating audience. The writers of the second group had no such loyalties and made no concessions to popular taste. They felt free to experiment with form and to press upon it fresh ideas. The publication of *50 Kuwentong Ginto ng 50 Batikang Kuwentista (Fifty Golden Stories by Fifty Master Story-tellers)* edited by Pedrito Reyes[22] had the effect of placing the innovators in a most advantageous position.

The battle lines seem to have been clearly drawn — although larger issues, then unrecognized, began to appear. The *Liwayway* school, it will be recalled, did not particularly recognize a literary past. But it did identify enough with the romantic sentiments that, in the work of the *awit* and *corrido* writers, had won popular approval. Dutifully extolling Huseng Sisiw and Balagtas, the *Liwayway* school accommodated itself to the stock situations and cliche ideas that the new public sought. Any reluctance to move away from this direction was readily discouraged. Rather than raise the level of the narrative form in any serious way, the *Liwayway* school settled for professionalism in the business of producing popular literature, regarding it as a virtuous gesture suited to the circumstance of the pursuit of letters in a country without its own source of newsprint and other paper products.

Its writers rode high on the assets that have accrued to the language through its formal use in the folklore, gains achieved by the chapbooks on the church-patio and through the *sari-sari* store level of distribution. Instead of being sold side by side with votive offerings and from counters with candy jars and sugar-and-peanut cakes, the work of the *Liwayway* writer would now reach its reader by courtesy of a modern delivery service. Printing empires were in the making. What the younger writers could not accept, obviously, was to see literary imagination becoming a tool of wealth and trade. This sentiment was not, however, easily expressed. While mindful of the service that the popular magazines were providing by spreading the idiom to the distant reaches of the archipelago, the younger writers felt that their elders were doing Philippine culture a disservice. In their evolving concept of the theory and practice of the short story a growing conflict between practicality and idealism was represented.

But the members of the new group were caught up in mundane problems themselves, and the importance of their stand against commercialization was not

infrequently obscured by their work for the very publishing empires that had routed earlier idealisms. The universities and colleges were shortly to provide the country new talent to replace that which by force of circumstances had been weaned away from literature. In this respect the progress of the writers in Tagalog paralleled that of their contemporaries who, using the English language and enjoying the sanctuary of the university, were already writing memorable short stories.

VI

The Filipino short story in English is a reaction against the commercialization of the Filipino's intuitive grasp of his cultural history. We have seen how the *awit* and *corrido* writers reached out to Europe and succeeded in keeping a national community stocked with virtual images of life, for its edification. When the Filipino mind, owing to an accident of history, accommodated itself to a unique form of the narrative, the modern short story, a similar performance had to be produced by the shaping imagination. This began in the late twenties and early thirties, about the same time that writers in Tagalog were themselves becoming disturbed over the way the literary tradition in the native language was being used. This confluence of awareness by both groups of writers was no coincidence. There was in the maturing Filipino spirit a need for fuller growth.

Although too easy a choice as a common language for peoples otherwise isolated within their vernaculars, English would be acceptable enough as a tool for growth. Its history and tradition, its metaphysics and rhetoric, more than sufficed to serve as serious barriers to the average learner. And this, too, was endurable. As in several countries that were later to be called the Third World,[23] English would serve as the language of government. But what was one to make out of those elements amongst the governed that dared to give artistic expression to their thoughts and sentiments in a school-learned language? Could this be anything but foolhardiness?[24]

At this point, Rizal's adoption of Spanish was simply too fresh in the Filipino memory. Spanish was no *wikang sinuso* for him. It was not an idiom drawn, as the Tagalog would say, from Mother's breast. And Rizal had to borrow not only an idiom but a literary form as well — adding debt upon heavy debt. He did clear the account, at an all-too-punitive interest rate. The writers that were to come, then, after Rizal's martyrdom in 1898, could not quite escape his example. When the learning of the English language moved from the improvised classrooms of the Thomasites to Gabaldon-style schoolhouses and, finally, by the early twenties, to the University of the Philippines and elsewhere, Rizal's example amounted to a challenge. Another generation of inheritors of that restless and durable artistic sensibility in the race had emerged.

The initial efforts at self-identification cannot be recalled without embarrassment. In 1912, Fernando Maramag wondered, for example, if some critic might be found who would tell the nation whether it would be "susceptible to the imaginings of a native

Tennyson."[25] The public would thus be "capable of receiving a poet's message with the uplifting sympathy that reaches the divine in man." Besides being a working newspaperman, Maramag was a practicing poet on the scene. Well heard was his call for the man of the hour who would tell the nation "whether the ideals and aspirations of the race" could find full expression in the newly learned language. Maramag stipulated, however, that such ideals must remain "distinctly" native.[26]

Thirteen years later, Jorge Bocobo put the national literary community on the alert. (And this has been the condition of the national scene ever since.) "In what language shall this Filipino literature be written?" Bocobo asked. Already the *awit* and *corrido* tradition seemed to have been forgotten. Nor had oral literature been able to win its due. A fresh elitism, as when *ilustrado* and *cacique* tastes prevailed, was in the air.

But like Maramag and other intellectuals of the period, Bocobo had not escaped the national inheritance of artistic sensibility. Besides writing plays, he launched a movement to preserve the national heritage in dance and song. For the present, his thoughts were on writing. "Less and less will it be in Spanish, and more and more in English." Yet all that would be temporary: eventually "the great Filipino novel . . . will not be written in English; it will be in one of the Filipino languages."

However that would be, the next decade found a more unequivocal advocate for English in Salvador P. Lopez, who was confident that the literature would "draw increasing sustenance through the old roots that first grew there [the University of the Philippines' campus] twenty-five years ago. . . . " The publishers of the *Philippines Free Press* were to issue, in a couple of years, Jose Garcia Villa's pioneering selection of the best short stories in English, from a crop of nearly six hundred that particular year. The *Free Press* was to say, without so much as a smile, that behind its effort to provide support for Filipino writing in English was,

> apart from self-interest, [the desire] to develop a school of Filipino short story writers or authors, partly with a view to the development of some literary genius who might make a name for himself in the United States. . . .[27]

What this meant was that the choice of English — that is, if the writer did have a choice — essentially opened up for him an opportunity that could be overlooked only out of sheer boorishness. Compared to the situation in which Rizal's artistic sensibility achieved its successes, this one was less ideal although it had the advantage of being apolitical; and such illusions and realities as it implied had to be recognized for what they were.

Now becoming attractive as a personal gesture of considerable public value was the act of writing itself, a national ideal that found expression in the Commonwealth constitution, particularly in the provision that defined the role of the state as a patron of arts and letters. Although literature did not count as a learned profession, say, like the law, its practitioners had to congregate in Manila where facilities for publishing were

available. Besides the *Free Press*, other magazines and journals took special interest in developing, in particular, the short story — the *Graphic*, *Philippine Magazine*, and weekend supplements to the Manila *Tribune* and *Philippines Herald*, to name but the principal ones. A new anthology had followed Villa's, this one edited by O. O. Sta. Romana, then a senior at the University of Santo Tomas who led, in developing an awareness of posterity, a growing corps of short story writers out of university classrooms and into editors' cubicles and press rooms as fledgling journalists. A civic-minded Philippine Book Guild issued titles by Villa, Manuel E. Arguilla, Arturo B. Rotor; the University of the Philippines student literary annual, not inappropriately named *The Literary Apprentice*, founded years back, now obtained fresh money from the university president's entertainment budget.[28] Because the thirties were ending, the time had come to make good the state's promise of patronage. Hence the First Commonwealth Literary Awards in 1940.

The stories of Manuel E. Arguilla (who, with his collection, *How My Brother Leon Brought Home a Wife and Other Stories*, won the year's Commonwealth Prize for the Short Story in English)[29] were not typical of the work of the period; nor were those by Arturo B. Rotor.[30] But the general excellence of their stories must be regarded as pledges for still more outstanding work to come and, at the same time, as standards that could be achieved by the rank and file through a formal study of the form. Indeed, later writers were to pursue this study abroad. Let it be noted, though, that the short story writers in Tagalog seemed to be moving along, though not necessarily ahead, on their own, striking out more or less on an independent course. At the time of the Japanese Occupation, though, several short story writers in English tried writing in Tagalog (it would be several years still before the language would be officially called Pilipino); and the experiment, apart from having been required by the exigencies of the the war, was regarded with considerable welcome.[31]

Largely understood, if rather unspoken of or discussed, was the lesson that the two writing groups were each learning from the other. The writer in Tagalog could see what sheer book-learning and formal, if self-conscious, techniques could accomplish; the writer in English saw how inspiration, derived from being able to reach an audience beyond the university campus, could generate material closer to actuality. These were secret lessons, as it were, grasped in the privacy of the artistic conscience. It was becoming possible, in any case, to document Philippine life through the short story — borrowed ostensibly from Edgar Allan Poe, O. Henry and Wilbur Daniel Steele. The Filipino imagination, however, did not seem comfortable with the styles that these writers represented; it favored plotlessness and its ultimate form in the so-called "slice of life."[32] This preference was sustained when soon after, the early stories of Ernest Hemingway and William Saroyan, along with those of Sherwood Anderson, began to exert a strong influence on the Filipino writer's sense of form and feel for language. Especially for the writers who chose English as their medium, persistence and discipline paid off.

This success could have been more spectacular had Filipinos been familiar at this time

with relevant literary experiences in neighboring countries. The Philippine scene had become too much a client of the American cultural establishment in those years before World War II; the Filipino intellectual was thus deprived of the instruction that cultures close by, in Southeast Asia and South Asia, could offer.

T. Inglis Moore, who had been a lecturer at the University of the Philippines, was to remark in 1947 how similar to that of his native Australia the experience in the Philippines was in regard to the use of the English language for literary expression. This was, of course, not too appropriate a comparison. Australia, after all, had had as an English colony her original stock of native-born speakers of the language. But to Moore the outback that had become a rich source of material for Australian writing had its counterpart in the Philippines, and he sensed an intensifying creativity in the air — the Philippines would soon have its own Henry Lawsons and Henry Handel Richardsons. He was of course to reconsider his enthusiasm when at a later date he wrote:

> When a colonial people has already enjoyed a traditional culture of its own, the conflict between this and the conquering culture of an alien people is comparatively clear-cut. This can be seen in the Philippines after 1898 when the new Anglo-Saxon culture of the American conqueror was imposed upon the Spanish-Filipino one established during the centuries of Spanish rule, and the Filipinos then struggled to achieve mental independence from colonialism by the creation of a national literature. While political freedom has been won, the cultural struggle still goes on. This is the constant theme of the Filipino literary critics.[33]

It is, in fact, the preoccupation of all Third World criticism as well.

A complementary lesson could have been offered by Indo-Anglian literature, too. The careers of Tagore and Sri Aurobindo, Mulk Raj Anand, R. K. Narayan and Raja Rao were to be truly relevant to the Filipino shortly. On occasion, then as now, and like Philippine writing in English, Indo-Anglian writing would in fact be required by nationalists to stoke the fires of an idealism that could cause writers to dream and write in their native tongues.

What urged the Filipino writer, perhaps happy enough in his insularity, to persevere in his craft? What drove him to write in English as much as he did? He knew that while he published a few stories, getting a book out would be an entirely different matter, and if he tried the latter, the project would be

> . . . delayed for months, to be squeezed in quickly by the press between run-offs of comic books and political broadsides. . . .[34]

Why give his best producing copy for the

> . . . Sunday supplements which, by Wednesday, may become torches for burning out nests of termites?[35]

The Indo-Anglian writer had experienced all that and much more; what saw him through was, according to C. D. Narasimhaiah, an "inwardness," a familiarity that spills over into total control of the received language.[36] And given that, what had pushed the Indo-Anglian writer yet further on? The promise of audiences? Or

> . . . the challenge of particular dispositions and susceptibilities which can only respond to the possibilities of a medium — in its presence will he feel called upon to give shape and substance to the unwrought urn, the unheard melody and, generally, give airy nothing a local habitation and a name.[37]

All this notwithstanding, the artist quite simply obeys, in Narasimhaiah's view, "his own inner law."

Among Filipino writers that "inner law" demanded, in addition to a surrender to inwardness, an acceptance of historical circumstances and participation as a social being through self-fulfillment. With English, there would be a considerable tradition that he could turn to. In the most practical terms, this meant working with words, which in turn meant working with authoritative dictionaries. This was an advantage that even the writer working in Tagalog did not have. It would be years, and after World War II at that, when, through the efforts of an Australian priest who worked practically singlehandledly, and during the lacuna of the Japanese Occupation, a fairly substantial English-Tagalog dictionary would appear.[38]

Another factor worked in favor of the Filipino writer in English, one which offset his seeming isolation from the larger world of international letters and transcultural issues. This was the not inconsiderable critical dialogue on the scene. The climate for it appeared to be right. Particularly in the fifties and sixties, literary criticism attained a vigorous, self-questioning voice. Such vapid topics as "Can writing be taught?" and "Where's the Great Filipino Novel?" were thin disguises for insights into the direction the writers were going. The Abadilla and del Mundo team were preoccupied with the same issues as their brethren working in English, but their scene did not acquire the excitement found where the writers in the school-learned language raised their literary potted plants regularly provided with water from the critical fountains of America and England.

By the late sixties, the high hopes of the *Free Press* had been fairly well forgotten, especially as the beginnings of a trade publishing in English surfaced in Manila. Central to the entire literary activity by now was the need for more reader support: an accounting had to be made as to whom the Filipino writer could reach, and especially in his own country. Leonard Casper, who watched the progress that was being achieved and, in 1962, published *Modern Philippine Short Stories,*[39] had to sound a warning. It seemed apparent to him that for the Filipino writer in English "to write honestly **about** his people, he must risk not writing **for** them."[40]

Ironic indeed as this looks, it cannot be denied that before the bar of literature the

Filipino short story writer in English was nonetheless acquitting himself quite well. Commenting on Casper's anthology, Donald Keene wrote:

> Whatever course Philippine literature may take, we are certainly fortunate that there are now Filipinos who can speak to us beautifully in our own language, without risking the terrible hazards of translation . . . The collection as a whole is of even more importance than the individual excellences. It is an admirable testimony to the emergence of another important branch of English literature.[41]

What was happening then was that while the Filipino writer in English might not be succeeding in getting to his people, from out of his tussles with a language not his own and with a form relatively new in his culture he was being counted as a contributor to world literature. For perhaps the Filipino short story writer in English was beginning to be the most instructive and unbiased observer of Philippine life, not to say the most accessible one as well. The difficulties of translation and the built-in intramurals among writers in Pilipino — the issue between purism and contemporary idiom, for example — have cost the latter much time and energy. The Filipino writer in English was spared this dissipation when history offered him a language and a literary tradition. What he had to mind was an inwardness for both. He might have told off his detractors, as Kamala Das did, defining a premise for the survival, if not the continued good health, of Indo-Anglian writing:

> I am Indian, very brown, born in Malabar,
> I speak three languages, write in two, dream in
> one. Don't write in English,
> they said,
> English is not your mother tongue. Why not
> leave
> Me alone, critics, friends, visiting cousins,
> Everyone of you, why not let me speak in
> Any language I like? The language I speak
> Becomes mine. . . .
> It voices my joys, my longings,
> My hopes, and it is useful to me as cawing
> Is to the crows or roaring to lions, it
> Is human speech, the speech of a mind that is
> Here and not there, a mind that sees and hears
> and
> Is aware. . . .[42]

Beyond the level of words, for that matter, the Filipino short story writer in English was voicing thoughts of his own. We realize this when we understand the kinds of statements that fiction, and particularly the short story, makes. Literary conventions have vocabularies of their own, and, of course, a grammar and a rhetoric that the writer puts at his disposal. It may well be that the Filipino writer was not quite aware of this, and this is probably fortunate, since more self-consciousness could destroy him.

Although introduced as an exciting discovery in *Story*, Manuel E. Arguilla led the group of writers presented to an international audience in the Casper collection. Now, they could speak beyond the borders of their country. The collection included A. B. Rotor, Francisco Arcellana, Edith Tiempo and many others. More collections by other editors followed. Casper himself supplemented his work in 1962 with *New Writing from the Philippines*.[43] A more than modest beginning in terms of international notice had been accomplished. The record to date is, in fact, rather impressive for an art that could be regarded by some as a country cousin to de Maupassant and Chekhov. The gods have been rather generous.

VII

The brevity of the short story is its essential disguise. This feature enables it to appear almost inconspicuous and to work its other disarming charms on the reader much in the same way the earlier Filipino verse-makers rendered their romances, opening their world of make-believe in the mode of the day. Instead of drawing from the lore of Europe, the story writer today has sought the lore of the modern world, and, working within the limits of the form, he has raised questions about his past and future, as Nick Joaquin has done, or about the ways of tradition as Manuel Arguilla and others have. He has defined certain states of the human condition brought on by war and exile, as in the work of Bienvenido N. Santos in *You Lovely People*;[44] class and status are probed with scalpel-sharp felicity as in the stories of Aida Rivera Ford[45] and Gilda Cordero-Fernando.[46] Examples of particular triumphs are too numerous to mention; suffice it to say that the sharpness of its thrust, the revelation of character usually required by the form, or the equally necessary discovery of some idiosyncracy of human life, the focus on an image that becomes an idea objectified . . . these and other skills that the short story brings off, and memorably, have come under the Filipino short story writer's control. Now, having achieved that, he has favored the form, cherishing it in fact above others — the novel and the play, for example — to a point where the muses that preside hereabouts could well be truly jealous.

And the short story has managed to be left alone. Over the years its writers in the Philippines have not allowed it to be commercialized. This trend has also been observed in the American short story. Its writers have been

> . . . left pretty much to themselves, freed from any expectations and preconceptions but their own as they begin to write. It is true that the old-fashioned commodity producers, of the sort who crowded the pages of so many large-circulation magazines now defunct, would be having a hard time of it had they not shrewdly followed their some-time readers into the newer technologies. But the short story in America at the present time, insofar as one may generalize, thrives in its apparent neglect, perhaps even because of it.[47]

The Filipino short story writer in English, and indeed the new generation of writers in Pilipino as well, know this phenomenon from having to live with it. Growth has resulted from the tradesman's neglect, not that artistic sensibility indeed has ever left the scene. What preoccupations could possibly send it away? Its place in the culture has become much too firm.

Through good times and bad, through the symbolic floods, through hours of high and low tide at the river Pasig, neither has this sensibility denied itself the wonder of expression. Never has there been a moment in the national experience when the bridge over the Pasig was without that curious group of eager souls looking at the water.

We must recognize their presence unequivocally. For Art is often surrounded by twilight-cool indifference. It is not difficult for a writer to feel at times that the society he serves is a ward of "catatonic patients who make sure only at the end of their trance that nothing escapes them."[48] In the Philippine experience, that trance has been intermittently broken: the artist does get heard. In any case, "it may not be entirely senseless," as Max Horkheimer reminds us, "to continue speaking a language that is not easily understood."[49]

NOTES

1. Francisco Arcellana, "Period of Emergence: The Short Story," *Brown Heritage: Essays on Philippine Cultural Tradition and Literature*, ed. Antonio Manuud (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1967), pp. 606-607.
2. "Kasaysayan ng Tulang Tagalog," *Landasin sa Panulaang Tagalog* (Quezon City: Pamana ng Pantikang Pilipino, n.d.), p. 1.
3. Many writers use the plural forms, Anglicizing the terms accordingly. *Awit* is Tagalog for "song"; *corrido* is believed to have derived from "ocurrido," meaning "event or happening." It is Tagalog that was used for the narrative verse derived from the European legends and their adaptations.
4. Damiana Ligon Eugenio, *Awit and Korrido: A Study of Fifty Philippine Metrical Romances in Relation to Their Sources and Analogues*, Diss. University of California, Los Angeles, 1965.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 395-396.
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 8-9.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 10.
8. For a translation, see Nick Joaquin, *Prose and Poems* (Manila: Alberto S. Florentino, 1963), pp. 191-193.
9. Nick Joaquin, *Portrait of the Artist as Filipino* (Manila: Alberto S. Florentino, 1966).
10. Manuel E. Arguilla, "How My Brother Leon Brought Home a Wife," *Modern Philippine Short Stories* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1962), pp. 59-67.
11. J. C. Tuvera, "Ceremony," from *Fifty Great Oriental Stories*, ed. Gene Z. Hanrahan (New York: Bantam Books, 1965), pp. 399-407.
12. See J. R. Rayfield, "What is a Story?" *Journal of the American Anthropological Association*, 74:5 (October 1972), pp. 1085-1106.
13. Eugenio, pp. 372-394.
14. *Ibid.*, pp. 438-447.
15. John M. Echols, *Literature of Southeast Asia* (New York: rpt. Educational Resources/Asia Literature Program, The Asia Society, n.d.), p. 4.
16. *Ibid.*
17. N. V. M. Gonzalez, "Rizal and Poetic Myth," *Literature and Society* (Manila: Florentino, 1964), pp. 32-54.
18. Echols, *op. cit.*, p. 4.
19. A. G. Abadilla, F. B. Sebastian, and A. D. G. Mariano, *Ang Mailing Kathang Tagalog* (Quezon City: Bedes' Publishing House, 1954), p. 5.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 11.
21. Manila: Cavite Publishing Co., 1936.
22. Manila: Ramon Roces Publications, 1939.
23. N. V. M. Gonzalez, "Imagination and the Literature of Emerging Nations" *Solidarity*, IX:5, pp. 31-40, and "Holding the Rainbow," *Manila Review*, 1:3, pp. 59-68.
24. N. V. M. Gonzalez, "The Filipino and the Novel," *Fiction in Several* ed. Henri Peyre (Boston: Beacon: 1968), pp. 19-29.
25. *Loc. cit.*
26. *Loc. cit.*
27. *Loc. cit.*

28. Elmer Ordonez, "Remembered by the Clowns," *Literary Apprentice*, XX:2 (October 1956), p. 58.

29. Manila: Philippine Writers Guild, 1940.

30. Manila: Philippine Writers Guild, 1937.

31. Under the auspices of the Manila Shinbunsya, *Liwayway* editors published the anthology of Tagalog short stories *Ang 25 Pinakamabuting Maikling Kathang Pilipino ng 1943* (Manila: 1944).

32. Robert Scholes and Robert Kellogg, *The Nature of Narrative* (New York: Oxford, 1966), p. 13.

33. T. Inglis Moore, *Social Patterns in Australian Literature* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971), p. 93.

34. Leonard Casper, *Modern Philippine Short Stories* (Albuquerque, New Mexico: University of New Mexico Press, 1962), p. xvii.

35. *Ibid.*

36. N. V. M. Gonzalez, "Holding the Rainbow," *Manila Review*, I:3, pp. 59-68.

37. C. D. Narasimhaiah, *The Swan and the Eagle* (Simla: Institute of Advanced Study, 1968), p. 11.

38. Leo James English, C. Ss. R., *English-Tagalog Dictionary* (Manila: Department of Education, R. P., 1965). Printed in Australia under the auspices of the Australian Government, this work covered "more material" than did a similar one undertaken by the Philippine Institute of National Language. The Australian Government, through an arrangement under the Colombo Plan, donated the entire edition of 80,000 copies to the Philippine Government as a "practical token of cooperation" between the two countries.

39. Casper, *op. cit.*

40. *Ibid.*, p. xviii.

41. Donald Keene, "Native Voices in a Foreign Tongue," *Saturday Review of Literature*, October 6, 1962, p. 44.

42. Narasimhaiah, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

43. Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 1966.

44. Manila: Benipayo, 1955.

45. *Now and at The Hour* (Manila: Benipayo, 1957).

46. *The Butcher, The Baker and the Candlestick-maker* (Manila: Benipayo, 1962)..

47. William Abrahams, *Prize Stories 1972: The O. Henry Awards* (New York: Doubleday, 1972), pp. xi-xii.

48. Max Horkheimer. *Critical Theory* (New York: Herder & Herder, 1972), p. 290.

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Three Readings:

The Brother
The Grandfather
The Maid

I. How My Brother Leon Brought Home A Wife

Or The Disguises of the Autobiographical Mode

Manuel A. Arguilla's "How My Brother Leon Brought Home A Wife" is beyond doubt the most widely read Filipino short story in English. It is perhaps also among the best loved and a favorite of those beginning to be acquainted with, as well as those who count themselves as long-standing friends of, Philippine literature in English.

The first claim derives from the fact that with the story's acceptance by and subsequent publication in Whit Burnett's *Story Magazine*, the most distinguished display window for new writing in the 'thirties, Arguilla received recognition. This accomplishment was not merely personal; it pointed to possibilities ahead for the Filipino short story.

Arguilla had a tremendous popular following, which was unusual for one whose work had the quality that distinguished him from that of most of his contemporaries. He did not pander to the popular taste. He wrote very much as his artistic requirements demanded and, in general, very much as he pleased. This latter tendency may have been responsible for the markedly autobiographical quality of his stories. In them he matched plot or action with the readily identifiable scene. Very clearly the man of letters of his generation, he played that role until the idealisms of World War II conscripted him for another, that of guerrilla and undercover man, and finally, the admired patriot and martyr, for the Japanese *Kenpeitai** would not allow one such as he to survive. He wrote much from out of what he knew and experienced, and Ermita district in Manila was a favorite subject, vying at times not too successfully with Nagrebcan, a barrio of Bauang municipality in La Union Province where he was born. Nagrebcan is perhaps the one place in Luzon that has been most artistically written about, a fact which has not escaped Arguilla's admirers and critics.

For "How My Brother Leon Brought Home a Wife," Arguilla drew lavishly from personal experience, and the atmosphere of romantic innocence that the story renders is not without an emotional appeal to be enjoyed privately rather than discussed in public. The word "charming" is often used to describe this private level of enjoyment; to scrutinize in a formal way that aesthetic delight is perhaps to undermine it. There is a sizable amount of "worth" that accrues to the reader and which gratifies him enough to opt for appreciative silence. But successful literary performances of this kind are generally more valuable than they appear. They are admired for rather their most

*Japanese Military Police

obvious features, and we move on to others; having indulged our atavistic search for beauty in one instance, we hope to succeed soon enough in the next. Having seen the macabre in Faulkner's "A Rose for Emily," we need not bother to investigate whether the author has made a statement in that story, for example, concerning Man's responses to Time. In Hemingway's "Hills Like White Elephants," Frank O'Connor calls our attention to "the repetition of key words and phrases" that are responsible for a hypnotic effect in that story, and which is "a new thing in story telling . . . " And this is a judgement well enough earned. We are gratified by the insight thus passed on and forego doing the story a further critical scrutiny on our own, blocking out the chance of Hemingway's revealing to us — as indeed he does — the process by which romantic promises turn into the bitter "I feel fine" sort of reality.[1]

Through a similar marvelous technical performance, Arguilla's "How My Brother Leon Brought Home a Wife" tells us much more than we are readily happy over. In summary, what we have is a story of the boy, Baldo, who has been dispatched by his father, a shrewd old man, a veteran of the Philippine Revolution, to escort home a new member of the family. This is a city girl, Maria, whom Baldo's elder brother, Leon, has recently married. In Baldo's eyes, Maria is remarkably lovely and truly lovable " . . . the fragrance of her was like a morning when papayas are in bloom."

Anxious to see how his daughter-in-law will take to country life, Baldo's father instructs him not to use the family *calesa* but the two-wheeled cart instead. Baldo is to hitch the bull, Labang, to the cart; and he is to use the river-bed trail instead of the provincial road for the journey home with the newly-weds.

Leon sees their father's meaning clear enough, for the ride down the river-bed trail can indeed be an ordeal. But Leon and Maria make a marvelous journey of it, what with the stars in the sky and a song that appropriately comes to mind. When, in due course, Baldo delivers the couple safely home, their father asks: "Did you meet anybody on the way?"

Baldo's reply, which is in the negative, is supplemented by an important remark: "Nobody passes through the Waig at night." It is as if Arguilla, we observe, is setting off from the mundane as best he can the new world into which Maria is to be handed over.

The father pursues the matter further. He asks if Maria showed fear of Labang:

> "Was she afraid of Labang?" My father had not raised his voice,
> but the room seemed to resound with it.
>
> * * * *
>
> "No, Father, she was not afraid."
> "On the way — "
> "She looked at the stars, Father, and Manong Leon sang."
> "What did he sing?"
> " 'Sky Sown with Stars'. She sang with him."

The information that the father did not expect does not surprise the reader. Adroitly, Arguilla underscores its import by setting off the previous dialogue in an appropriate mood.

> He was silent again (Baldo continues his narrative). I could hear the low voices of Mother and my sister Aurelia downstairs. There was also the voice of my brother Leon, and I thought that Father's voice must have been like that when he was young.

The connection between the father, the song, the family, and the stars cannot be missed. The story closes with the Father telling Baldo that it is "time you watered him (Labang), my son," and, briefly, we see the boy looking at Maria again. His approval of her sums up the acceptance by the family of the bride. Arguilla's details are sharply perceived but they are all rendered in Baldo's terms, so that it is the reader's responsibility to recognize the representations laid out before him as more meaningful than they appear. Baldo, in this light, is our typical innocent — in Erik Erikson's view, he is involved in the confusion of roles[2] — while the father is the man of knowledge, the leader of the tribe, testing whether the years that lay ahead for him predict ego integrity or despair. This projection is vital to him. He has a wound, acquired during the Revolution, that still festers. How Maria, city girl that she is, will impress him is not exactly predictable, Leon's good sense notwithstanding.

> "Does that worry you still, Maria . . .
> From the way you talk, he might be an
> ogre, for all the world . . . "

Leon's confidence that his family will accept his bride whole-heartedly is an all-too-instinctive feeling, and one which comes through to us from what Baldo has to report about the song, "Sky Sown With Stars,"

> . . . that he and Father sang when we cut hay in the fields at night
> before he went away to study . . .

Crucial, then, to the unity of the family (and of the community, for a list of the less essential characters in Baldo's tale will reveal to the reader a rather large collection of kith and kin) is this slender yet vital link. It is as if Arguilla were saying that in song and poetry we remain together. The traditional separation between country and city is remedied by song. We say "as if" advisedly, however. For, all throughout, the story reaches us through Baldo's voice; and Baldo's voice is not necessarily the author's. Worse, it is an innocent's voice.

Most readers overlook this detail, as who wouldn't, what with Baldo so engaging a character and the things perceived so rich in *costumbrista*, in local color. When we do this, however, we over-emphasize Baldo's function. He is merely the author's chosen narrator, we must remember. How close in time he is to the events that he deals with is of some significance at this point.

Baldo's speaking voice suggests that not too much of a time lag lies between Leon

and Maria's return to Nagrebcan and the rendering of the narrative. We feel this from the quality of Baldo's impressions. They seem utterly fresh. Space is delicately and precisely observed.

> Now the shadow took fright and did not crowd so near. Clumps of anda dasi and arrais flashed into view and quickly disappeared as we passed by. Ahead, the elongated shadow of Labang bobbed up and down and swayed drunkenly from side to side, for the lantern rocked jerkily with the cart.

Space, in short, has not yet become time in concrete form.[3] We are not dealing here with Baldo's memories but, rather, with virgin observations; at least, Arguilla manages this illusion.

This is a feature, in any case, that conceals the author's shrewd technique. Through Baldo, some of Leon's own thoughts and feelings (for Nature and the family, for instance) may be revealed. Baldo's own appreciation of his brother's personality, and of Maria's, may be rendered in terms unadulterated by city- or school-acquired experiences. Arguilla is thus able to give us a view of the generational gap and of country-city polarity on two levels — Baldo's and the authorial one. It is with the author's insight into these matters that we take in and accept Baldo's story, so that our total support of the story's theme is never directly solicited. Arguilla has been artist enough to merely invite our attention to it, or rather, to Baldo's experience of it. If we accept Baldo completely, the author seems to say, so will we accept his idea, i.e., that in poetry is our regeneration. In song is transcended the alienation brought on by the necessary polarity between country and city. Baldo, thus, is, and yet not quite, the author in disguise.

Apart, then, from simply giving us a narrative, a story may point to how we ought to conduct the business of living. It does this instructional chore rather openly, although by precisely seeming not to do anything of the sort. Indeed, the indirections of fiction provide one great source of delight for the serious reader.

Arguilla's Baldo, as a viewpoint character, as the center of perception for his story, is a measure of his meaning. In the young boy whose dew-drop innocence we watch, Leon's return to the native hearth is observed closely but, from the authorial standpoint, largely in synthesis. This has to be, since in developing societies this sort of event is symbolic of the movement toward fuller progress. We would reject this as sheer sentimentality today were it not for the fact that Baldo's sensibility is rooted in Nature (at story's end it is time to mind Labang's needs) and in History (the father has had his share of pain from the past). There is, moreover, Baldo's relationship with the community. The boy's friendliness is returned by one and all with affection derived from a long experience of sharing with Nature's bounty (papayas in bloom). Baldo, of course, is an extension of Leon in time and knowledge. When Maria tells Leon, "Look, yonder is our star," Baldo assigns to her and Leon " . . . the biggest and brightest in the sky." The dialogue reveals precisely where Baldo locates himself on the scene, i.e., the emotional

landscape brought on by this discovery.

". . . as I climbed back into the cart my heart sang."

However biographical information bears out that this is an episode out of Arguilla's personal life, we have nevertheless only Baldo's story. "How My Brother Leon Brought Home a Wife" is Baldo's initiation to the world of the union of Country with City, of the integration of one generation into the old, and of the transcendental in poetry that transforms all this movement into an episode transfused with beauty.

II. The Tomato Game
Or History and the Imagination

For all the brevity that the short story writer is supposed to observe, excess is a feature demanded of him. The sense of life he communicates to the reader is characterized by abundance. People tend to appear bigger than life-size; events seem to exceed their usual temporal frame; places emerge with a stunning particularity of detail. For excess in the secret behind the de-familiarization of experience which fiction presents. Habits dull our senses and eventually atrophy them. Fiction, thus, must rehabilitate our awareness of various aspects of the actuality that surrounds us. And the writer works out of plenitude only to present it in one of the briefest of possible forms.

Since history, or the course of events in time and place, is, for the writer, too rich and often confusing as material, he must look for the metaphor with which to control the portion of it he has chosen to present. The metaphor, or controlling image, solves his dilemma. Being in itself already a known image, he can now begin to de-familiarize it, that is, make it look new and mean more than what it appears to mean. The result is excess, although one that is not measureable in terms of verbal abundance but rather, as in music, of resonance. At this point the reader is said to experience what is sometimes called "felt life."

As in actuality, "felt life" is informed by change, which becomes manifest in a multitude of ways. Things happen to people, places are transformed, etc. The reader of fiction is deliberately made aware of these, and quite as deliberately forced by an inner logic, or a sense of inevitability promoted by the writer, to see the entire construct as a unity. So-called literary techniques provide the arsenal that wins the battle of credibility for the writer. He has a wide range of weapons from which to make his choice. He could go for the trend, or for the conventional, or even the unique. The technique he chooses, though, must be subservient to his artistic needs. The term "gestalt" has been used to describe such a unit of construction that adds up artistically into a whole, a "pattern of artistic worth," as Herbert Read has emphasized,[1] "independent of the ideas expressed." This independence may be, in fact, illusory, as in the nature of artistic compositions, ideas thrive immeasurably in the way they are expressed. Conversely, the manner of their expression shapes those ideas themselves.

Because "The Tomato Game" is a composition of our own it may appear difficult for us to be objective about it. This can be surmounted, however, by our being attentive only to its most readily observable features. On the face of it, this is a story that is easy enough to summarize. We are told about an old man, known simply as Lolo (Grandfather), and of his effort to bring a bride to the U.S. It is clear that he is on the

rather wrong side of the bargain, and is in fact at the mercy of one Sophio Arimuhanan, an entrepreneur and lawyer. It was the latter who made the arrangements for Lolo, the old man paying, doubtless, a handsome fee. We are told also that the bride, Alice, is to arrive soon — and with a young man on whom Lolo has adopted a paternal interest. He would see the young man through school so that the latter might follow in the footsteps of Arimuhanan.

All this information comes through to the reader in the language of a narrator who, as it happens, is a lecturer at a certain Transpacifica University, a school of dubious repute. The entire material is rendered to us in the form of a letter addressed to a certain Greg, the narrator (or letter-writer's) friend. It appears that the letter-writer has tried, on various occasions, to tell Greg about Lolo and Alice, and about Alice and the young man as well. The letter-writer confesses, however, to having been unable to put the story together. The occasion for the letter is a recent visit to where Lolo lives, a typical tomato farm. The summer crop has been harvested; the smell of rotting tomatoes permeates the air. Sophio and the letter-writer arrive at Lolo's place to find that preparations for the arrival of Alice have been well on their way.

Something about the visit upsets the letter-writer and he makes this clear to his friend Greg. Thus, in the letter, is not only Lolo's story, but also that of its writer. As readers we are asked to consider that indeed the two stories are one and the same, or should be regarded as such; the two are aspects of one metaphorical image. As *that* unity they provide us with what the author calls "the tomato game."

Having described the story, we may now turn to the problem of discovering what it is all about.

What instantly strikes us is its epistolary form, which defines its brevity. For this one letter has indeed to be brief to resemble as close as possible letters we are familiar with in actual life. We could suspect, however, that a substantively weighty enough subject is suggested by this brevity. In fact, the short story holds always such a secret.

This encourages us to construct a narrative around Lolo's life as an immigrant, a narrative containing more than a letter. We see him as a farm worker who, having spent a good number of years as a migrant laborer in California, has not had the chance to settle down and raise a family. The story is cryptic about the exact circumstances surrounding Lolo's personal life; but we do feel that his is a typical case. For he is not much characterized, nor individuated. Lolo, is shown deliberately as the victim of those insuperable circumstances that Filipino farm laborers have known. This typicality is pressed upon us. By not providing data contrary to what we have gathered from journalism or sociology, the story directs us to fall back on common knowledge. As the typical Filipino has become expendable as a laborer in America's agri-business, Lolo is shown, furthermore, in the twilight of his years. It is a lonely period of his life, as is the setting in which we see him, the postharvest scene of the year's tomato crop.

In what perhaps is going to be his terminal effort at keeping his self-respect and pride, Lolo has launched himself into a project in which intervenors had long made killings for themselves — getting a bride. Sopi (a nickname for Sophio) is not surnamed Arimuhanan for nothing. The word is Pilipino for "he who takes advantage of everything." Sopi certainly does not leave matters alone. He uses Lolo to advantage — living up, as it were, to the surname. The use of the nickname Sopi reflects the level of acceptance that he has enjoyed in his trade — which is ostensively that of importer and exporter. Lolo's affairs make only a modest contribution to Sopi's professional image; indeed, it is a matter one attends to on the side, as on this particular Sunday morning, in the course of one's search for other amusements — cockfighting (illegal in California) and driving around the countryside.

The other characters, Tony and Alice, deserve appropriate sketches in their own right. They are, like the others again, typical. To understand them and the demands on our personal knowledge of the types they represent may be easy or difficult, depending on our spatial or temporal provincialism. We would not grasp the reference to Manila's Central Market, for example, without a working familiarity of at least the teeming bazaars in Asian or Southeast cities, and of the rampant and kinky varieties of sex encountered in the alleys and dark corners of the ghettoes. A temporal provincialism could block off negative attitudes toward the latter; in particular, it could pass up simply as picturesque a passage like the following:

> The old man remembered, and his eyes were smiling.
>
> "The Central Market. You know those stalls. If you happen to be off guard, you're likely to be pulled away from the sidewalk and dragged into the shop for a — what do you call it here? — a blow job!"
>
> The old man smiled, as if to say "I know, I know. . . ."

From Sopi, whose soul is not exactly black, we get a glimpse of Alice's background and of the relationship between her and Tony. In the case of the latter, we are asked to consider yet another type — the young man as a searcher of fame and fortune — but with a side-glance into Philippine social history, for the boxing ring has had, and appears to continue to have, its stable of Filipino folk heroes, Pancho Villa having led them all into the illusions of championship in the sports world of the twenties.

Tony's educational cover suggests another design in indirection. It comes from the same esemplastic structure[2] as the reference to Transpacifica University, the letter writer's "miserable" job in that institution of learning, and the news item about the granting of an *honoris causa*. The word "prestigious" sums it up. So much material now appears, it should strike the reader, to have been deliberately thrown in, in so little space: our sense of their relevance could be strained.

This is all the more so since we have focused our attention so much on Lolo. We believe the story about him, a presumption that resulted from our critical provincialism. It has accustomed us to watch a character's articulation in the narrative in terms of a

situation, complication, and resolution. In both the literary past of, say, New Zealand and the Philippines, editors have often told their writers: "No story, no cheque!" By "story" there was no misconstruing what was meant. The word stood for the Hollywood sense of happening, which evokes a studio scene and the director's exhortation: "Lights! Camera! Action."

The method adopted in "The Tomato Game," however, is unconventional in that, as may have been suggested here, we have a nest of boxes — story within a story, within story: we have Lolo's story, the letter-writer's and, finally Greg's. In the end, the entire structure must make for the reader that ever so necessary and compelling unity that the controlling image is bound, when successfully employed, to achieve. We have to see how this comes off.

The image of the tomatoes rotting in the field is a convenient starter. The smell of rotting tomatoes "kept trailing" them, says the letter-writer, so that at the story's end we do sense that what he has set down is an initiation, on his part, to an experience embodying how pride and self-esteem remain with us even in the twilight of our days.

But why does the letter-writer tell Greg of his abortive efforts at rendering Lolo's story? The obvious answer is that Lolo's story is not his alone. It is an experience in moral corruption that the letter-writer is aware of, and which he has tried to understand and, finally, passes on, if with yet imperfect understanding, to his friend, Greg. His efforts at rendering it thus suggests the difficulty of our putting ourselves at a distance from the object (the moral corruption) so that we may see it for what it is. Considering the years encompassed in Lolo's experience alone, this act of establishing distance is art's assertion of an advantage over other means of expression and modes of understanding.

Greg, of whom we know nothing, is he who really knows so much at the close of the story. Theoretically, a reader could be held to his share of completing the story himself. Thus he might begin to put himself in Greg's place, as one who now knows about the letter-writer's recognition of the world of corruption. The reader is transformed and, in short, becomes Greg himself.

At this point, we could ask, "What does the story say?" but could only get the question thrown back at us. The fact, however, is that that point must be settled, for we have experienced enough the process by which our impressions have evolved. The final insight is too crucial to be shied away from. We remember how a story must of necessity express the ineffable. Discursive forms convey their meaning discursively; narrative forms perform by providing a dynamic image of characters in time and space that become an embodiment of an idea. Yet, a story includes a narrative and much more besides. There are forces operating in the genre that cause a lot more things to happen as we read. In other words, what *has* "The Tomato Game" told us?

Having seen quite a few things going, as it were, the dreadful prospect of pinning

down import or signification becomes awesome. But as long as we are aware that it is the import of an art object, the signification of a particular sample of a genre that we are anxious to know about, we may have willy-nilly come upon what we have been seeking. For in raising the question of meaning, we fall back on our experiences as readers. That is, we have been attentive to how feelings (brought to our attention by an author's rendering of life-like circumstances) have become comprehensible to our otherwise dormant sense of awareness. Our delight is in having been awakened to a point where those feelings, through our careful reading of the text, add up as one large assent to life.

Though hardly the last word that can be said about it, that seems to be one answer to the problem of meaning. In any case, however and whenever we consummate the act of reading, we are in fact being directed by those esemplastic powers that the imagination has used to deal with the known and the common in history. We yield to those powers, much as writers themselves do, to the demon that takes command of their knowledge of genres and conventions and, eventually, of their vision of life.

III. Love In The Cornhusks
Or Love in a Plantation Society

What strikes the reader about "Love in the Cornhusks" is its simplicity. Indeed, we have here a straightforward account concerning a young wife and mother, Tinang, who, with her child, pays her former mistress a visit. The latter is wife to a man of means; the family owns and operates a farm where, among other things, a tractor is used. Tinang's purpose is to ask if her former mistress might stand as sponsor at the child's christening. Earlier, Tinang had left the family's service to marry a Bagobo, a decision which was not entirely unrelated to the fact that the latter, although not a Christian, owns at least two hectares of land. As Tinang on this visit prepares to leave, she is informed that a letter has been awaiting her at the local drug store, which also serves as the local post office. The letter, it turns out, comes from Amado, the young man who used to drive the tractor but who had to quit his job to care for his ailing mother. In somewhat picturesque language Amado's letter tells of the young man's affection for Tinang. She had reached sixth grade and could read all right. She succumbs, in fact, to memories of their friendship. Her love for Amado is momentarily awakened, even as she has the Bagobito, the baby whose father is Bagobo, with her, asleep in a bed of cornhusks under a *kalamansi* tree. Tinang is thus overwhelmed with a sense of guilt, especially as a "little green snake" languidly slithers into the tall grass near by. She almost forgets the child who has been sleeping "motionless on the mat of husk" and, frantically, Tinang prays that she not be punished for this transgression. Tinang searches her baby's skin for marks that might suggest snake bites. Amado's letter is left among the cornhusks.

This summary is hardly a complete one; but if it does suggest what the "Love in the Cornhusks" is all about it should serve our purpose for the present. Among the many obstacles to the enjoyment of fiction is the easy gratification we get from summary as the equivalent of the text itself. To the question "What happened?" is an answer that nowhere approaches what critical reading may supply.

All narratives, we must remember, deal with events and to enhance our attention to them their various components may have to undergo rearrangement. This is overtly a manipulation, a contrivance; it is either easily detected or shrewdly concealed. In any case, we understand that tactic as a convention and we tend to go along with it. Thus, plot is precisely what the word means.[1] Imagine if detective stories did not use plots; or, if stories concerning love lost and found, or vice versa, did not resort to this contrivance and the practice were unsanctioned, as it were, by literary practice. These genres would be non-existent altogether.

Plot, in fact, provides us at the outset with a working basis for understanding what the

story might be about — in short, for meaning. If by the word "meaning," we understand that which is "sayable" about anything concrete or abstract, we would readily note that quantification is possible. The attribute "meaningful" would then refer to the concrete or abstract "object" about which a number of statements could be made. Utterances related to events, speaking of the narrative as such an "object," would constitute but one statement out of many that are possible, the types of kinds depending on the story elements on which they are based. It is said that classics are books that continue to engage our attention and cause us to care about them, which is not unlike our receiving travel instructions, as it were, and then discovering a city or a countryside to exult over. The critical reader, if his good fortune holds up, is he whose passport is stamped with the appropriate visas so that he might venture into the interior or in some way prolong his sojourn.

The answer to the question "What happened?" does not then take us too far. But it is fortunate that our familiarity with the short story form provides us something to go by. We would remember, for that matter, that a story is an utterance — a sentence, if you will, and as such has its subject and predication. In "Love in the Cornhusks," it appears obvious that Tinang represents the subject, the "love" in the title. What does "in the cornhusks" stand for, as a predication? At first reading we saw enough of the story to realize that the author gave us a description of actual "cornhusks" and of Tinang's baby ("Is the baby 'love' or the fruit thereof?" we ask, and know at once that we cannot possibly be more gross) asleep upon the bed that did service for it. We should be able to do better now, on second reading. What sort of love, we might ask, would Tinang objectify? Perhaps the data suggested by "in the cornhusks" could help to outline, or frame, that representation.

We return then to the story's opening paragraph with the idea of following, as closely as possible, what the author has done with Tinang. The dogs are instantly hostile to the character, we observe. Tinang adjusts the baby's cap as she reaches the Señora's gate and, except for the little black mongrel that apparently recognizes her, the canine population hereabouts rejects her.

That little mongrel dog is called "Bantay," and the word is Pilipino for "sentry." The place then is obviously one that is worth guarding. Is it a citadel or something? What is so precious within that so deserves "Bantay"? Are there values in contemporary society that the author is questioning? Are those values to be found, translated in day-to-day activities, in the Señora's household? "The big animals barked in displeasure." We are told this much at the end of the second paragraph.

It appears, then, that something is about to happen soon concerning those values — something that not likely to please whosoever it is that the "big dogs" serve. Such a happening would be quite the opposite of what the "little black mongrel" performed "sentry duty" for.

(Incidentally, the story seems to divide itself easily into twelve units, which we shall

from time to time indicate in this discussion. We have discussed thus far what is covered in the first unit.)

The second unit of the narrative introduces Tito, the Señora's son, the "young master," as Tinang calls him. Some time has passed since her last days of service in this house, but she displays a deference to the boy that has not diminished. This second unit deals exclusively with Tinang's descent from her seemingly high station as servant (caretaker of those orchids, etc.) to wife of a Bagobo man. The change of status has diminished her in the eyes of the Señora, and more so in those of the boy. To both, Tinang's baby has a cap that provides more than substantial proof of this (although we have seen Charles Bovary, as a schoolboy, wear a cap of that sort himself; and what are we, then, to make of that?) All the same, Tinang recognizes no malice in Tito, or censure in Señora. On the contrary, she notes with quiet satisfaction that Tito had grown up, i.e., has added a few more inches to his height. The "Aba!" for all its appropriateness as an expression of wonder, escaping from Tinang's lips as it did (" . . . you are so tall now, Tito . . . ") — is all too ironic. In any case, both the boy and his mother see monstrosity where, in Tinang's eyes, there cannot possibly be any at all. We are given to think that whatever it is in her heart that Tinang has for her baby is a "monstrosity" in the eyes of Tito and his mother. The child's ears "are huge," says Tito. Already Tinang looks "like a Bagobo," the Señora observes, and in a tone that leaves no doubt as to the criticism intended. The passage is truly marvelous in its management of these suggestions, and as readers we feel enough of them to sense all the more the irony in Tinang's situation, since she does not appear to respond to, let alone, know, what we have suddenly become too familiar with.

Instead of resentment, she feels "a warmness" to both the Señora and Tito. Now as visitor, rather than former servant, she sees the household in a different light. The *agua de colonia* blending with the smells of the kitchen is given us by the author as Tinang's objective correlative for the comfortable world that she had left to become wife to a foul-smelling Bagobo man, Inggo, and mother to his child. Already another pregnancy is suggested. The Señora sounds the warning: *"Hala!"* In other words: "You had better watch out! You'll soon see!" And this third unit of the story finds Tinang further put in her place: the Señora makes the offer concerning those hand-me-downs for the mother and the baby.

What is Tinang's response? Her innocence is incorrigible; we are rather impatient with her for that. In this instance, we witness her slip back to her earlier status without being aware of where that gesture leads: she expresses a curiosity about the farm and the household. In plantation society, the Señora rules over these domains through a peculiar allocation of power and sharing of responsibility with the Señor. Appropriately, at this point Amado is introduced. He is to the Señor what Tinang is to the Señora. Amado has gone away, we learn, leaving the tractor in bad repair. Did not Tinang leave the house, leaving the orchids for some other girl servant to look after? For reasons of material security, Tinang marries her Bagobo man; out of filial devotion, Amado leaves his place of employment to be near his ailing mother. The baby derives from Tinang's

decision; the mother's death and his separation from Tinang derive from Amado's. The author has established several balances from out of one fulcrum — the exercise of choice.

As the figure of Amado comes to our ken, Tinang's baby cries; and the Señora's explanation (that the little Bagobo must be "hungry") strikes us as appropriate although not quite exact. This thought would nag us for some time, and we might return to the scene later to resolve its import. Suffice it to state at this point that the author possibly suggests a connection between the child and Amado that is far more than merely an incidental one.

Nothing direct is hinted about this in the next paragraph, although we note that Amado, who is presumably a baptized Christian, would, once Tinang's child is baptized as well (and with the Señora for sponsor), serve as the child's model. Tinang does not say this; but we surmise that the request she is making of the Señora (that the latter stand as sponsor at the baby's baptism, and which is the reason for the visit), is in answer to the promptings, deep within her, for the good life she has witnessed and understood, however vaguely, from her years of service in the household and, generally speaking, through her membership in the plantation society. That good life, however, must of necessity begin with one's being christened. A *madrina* at baptism is a surrogate mother, one charged by the Church to come to the child's aid on occasions when the natural mother fails at her role as an extension of the Faith. To understand the *madrina's* role and then to observe the Señora's response to the request Tinang has made, give us, incidentally, a sidelong glance into the practice of Catholicism in plantation society.

For in this society, religion has been discovered and used as a lever for patronage. The *madrina* or *padrino* becomes, in the nature of things, the bestower of economic advantages. We are thus getting a better view of how, in some way, a collective unconscious seems to become operative in the child's psyche. We recall how it began to cry as Amado is brought to the fore. Amado has disappointed his patron by leaving his job and not returning to it as he must have promised. The baby's cry, if ostensibly from hunger or some discomfort, could be just as well an innocent's protest over the patron-worker relationship — an experience not exactly unknown to it, since it has suckled all the while at Tinang's breast.

In the succeeding section, the fifth unit, we find the Señora's continued role as patroness rather more ominous than ever. It is from her, in fact, that Tinang learns about Amado's letter. The Señora admits to having been tempted to open it ("to see if there was bad news") and Tinang is further warned by those dogs. Tito's restraining hand prevents the dogs from attacking her (for she is on her way to learn about Amado's affection for her); but Tito, the young master, mounts his own "attack." "Bring me some young corn next time," he tells her, speaking as if to one in need of minding past favors and unresolved obligations.

At the drug store, however, Tinang gives proof of her full stature as a person. We

discover that she had not been diminished through servitude in the plantation society. Firstly, she has a name — Cristina Tirol. Secondly, (and to the disappointment of the owner of the drug-store) she could not be subject to his power as tradesman, for she has not come to purchase anything. Indeed, she is here, to demand service: she wants her letter handed over. Thirdly, she is not illiterate, as the drug-store owner has suspected.

The author, thus, presents Tinang with a personality much more remarkable than the one we have become acquainted with. Here is a woman who can hold her own, and who has a place in Nature and in the circle of working folk. It is not for nothing that even both the baby and the letter — for she may attend to the letter — are "smeared with mud." Amado's letter is in English and thus suggests history (for Amado, like Tinang, must have retained some of the instruction given under the American-type public school system in the Philippines of this period, which would be the mid- or late thirties).

It is at this juncture that we learn about Amado's mother. Amado, as the name suggests, is not only "the loved one" but also a person who has known love. Tinang, with her sixth grader's education, is ill-equipped to grasp the implications of the letter: the vocabulary and syntax of the utterances therein might be all too revealing. With the emotions expressed in the letter, we, as readers can respond to the image of Amado that emerges here. Likewise, our appreciation of Tinang reacting as the loved one becomes rather keen because of Amado's message. We now match these two impressions against what the story offers us directly as we come to this turn of the action. For Tinang is now swept by remembered details of her past at the farm and as a servant in the Señora's home. How fitting, we note, that it was while on an errand concerning nuts and bolts that she and Amado would learn of each other's love and seek to translate this knowledge into action.

There is in Tinang's mind, we now discover, a singleness of import to be derived from the emotion she identifies as love. A woman marries the man she loves; he is her model of good, which, in her terms, means being well-dressed like the local schoolteacher and being able someday to go to engineering school. To her, good is the present and the future, encapsulated in love.

This does not allow for separation, which could be a less desirable fate than being wife to another. We remember that Tinang "laughed when a Bagobo with two hectares of land asked to marry her" but her choice of the latter for husband is not justified by her scale of values. The values of plantation society are perhaps much too pervasive to question. In any case, two hectares and a Bagobo seem preferable to silence and separation. What vitiated Tinang's perception of the future we can only surmise; but the two years of Amado's absence did not sit well with her, especially considering his announced plan to be away, "for only two days." Tinang, then, has opted for a "now" rather than for a "tomorrow." And this raises a curious point: Did work at the Señora's household influence her perception of time? Amado, the loved one, did not seem to have lost his perception of time — which he understood as a long present and an indefinite future ("I close with best wishes to you, my friends Gonding, Serafin, Bondio,

etc." Amado says in his letter, in a note remarkably without anxiety or urgency) where relationships change. Tinang, on the other hand, has learned enough as servant to "laugh at" the Bagobo with two hectares of land and yet marry him. Now she would even have their first born held bound, by virtue of a Catholic baptism, to the values of the society she had served. This sense of reality is the measure of Tinang's growth through separation from love.

When she sees the "little green snake" and, in terror, remembers her child, it is with a folksy "Hail Mary!" ("Ave Maria Santisima!") that she begins her appeal that she be spared punishment. What has she done? Was punishment due her for her having momentarily betrayed, through indulging in romantic recollections, her status as the Bagobo's wife? This would seem incommensurate with the sense of guilt that she appears to be suffering from and which calls for fervent supplication. Or, if we accept that in her innocence of spirit, such a high level of guilt is reasonable in Tinang's case — what then? Admitting the validity of this feeling in Tinang does not of course hinder our recognition that the author indeed intends to make us see the disproportion suggested. There is hyperbole that we must grasp.

It is in Amado's letter, to begin with. Amado's devotion to his mother is, in fact, hyperbolic. Likewise, those angry dogs at the opening of the story. For why should they be so upset about a young wife and child turning up the gate of the plantation house? Is the author, then, calling our attention to the hyperbolic quality in the relationship of master and servant in that setting? And, again, of the loyalties developed through marriages, of wifely responsibilities? Is Tinang's terror at the end another hyperbole of mother's love?

We must not forget, in any case, the plantation society that is the background of the metaphor. Thus, "Love in the Cornhusks" makes a metaphor of love in a setting where death (as in Amado's mother), separation (Tinang's distance from Amado), and accommodation (Tinang's choice of the Bagobo) appear to be the conditions for survival. In Tinang's present-oriented perception of time, death, separation, and accommodation, are all of these contained and containable. We carry on, in short. The spoiled sibling of plantation culture grows up all the taller (Tito) and will expect propitiatory gifts (young corn) from such stragglers as there are (Tinang and the baby). Through her metaphor on a servant woman's visit with a former mistress, Aida Rivera-Ford has given us an analysis of plantation society; and from a peek into that society (could it be any society as well?) she has defined for us a meaning of love.

Let us see how the characters embody this subject, each one contributing as their roles are played out to a definition of what love in plantation society means. To begin with, we have Mr. Jacinto, the school teacher. He appears to be a representation of one desirable ideal, one whom an Amado might emulate. We have, next, the Bagobo, who is hardly a model in the sense that Mr. Jacinto is, let alone in the scale that Amado might use to measure his advance; but for Tinang the Bagobo was in fact acceptable enough. Then we have the Señor, the Señora and Tito; these three make a triad that is the source

of the day-to-day pressures characteristic of reality and continuity of plantation culture. Tinang and the child are a pair, the baby an obvious opposite to Tito. Tinang, being chiefly in focus, embodies what it is that the others are not — she is love in this culture where all the others represent the lack of it or some defect in its expression. Tinang's resources of love are beyond question; she has had an excess of love ever since her awareness of the emotion. "Come," Amado had said to her; and her loyalty to the Bagobo is simply another aspect of that excess. To the romantic girl's (and the wife's) kind of love must be added that one relevant to motherhood. Indeed, Tinang adjusts that cap on the baby's head for good reason.

Against the background of the patronage-ridden plantation culture, "Love in the Cornhusks" defines the range of that love and the conditions under which it appears to survive. And having said all that we must leave room for one problem: did the author intend such a statement indeed? To answer this, one must fall back on the idea of the freedom that one exercises as a reader. It is much the same kind of freedom that writers exercise when they set words on paper. With utmost scrupulousness in the exercise of that freedom, writers and their readers try to find common ground in meaning.

All that critical reading can achieve, however, is to put intuition and insight at the service of that freedom. Criticism provides the maps and the guidebook that tell us about the country where the author lives.

NOTES

I. "How My Brother Leon Brought Home a Wife", or The Disguises of the Autobiographical Mode

1. Frank O'Connor, *The Lonely Voice* (New York: Bantam, 1968) p. 310.
2. Nicolaus Mills, in *Comparison: A Short Story Anthology* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1972) suggests that in studying short stories, one must give higher priority to problems related to a character's growth as an individual and his relationship to the world rather than to those elements of fiction concerned directly with craft and technique. It is for this reason, says Mills, that his anthology is based on Erik Erikson's idea that human development is best understood in terms of a series of crises that begin with the individual's relationship to his family and eventually include his relationship to all of society.
3. Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969), p. 8.

II. "The Tomato Game", or History and the Imagination

1. Herbert Read, *English Prose Style* (New York: Beacon, 1966), p. 66.
2. Northrop Frye, *Fables of Identity* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, & World, Inc., 1963), pp. 29-30.

III. "Love in the Cornhusks", or Love in a Plantation Society

1. Robert Scholes, *Structuralism in Literature* (New York: Yale University Press, 1974), pp. 78, 80.

STUDY GUIDES

Native Land

Narciso G. Reyes

The author of this story, which was originally written in Tagalog, had long hoped that he would one day see a faithful translation of his work in English. Indeed, there have been several such attempts; none of them seemed to have pleased him. The version here included is the translation of *"Lupang Tinubuan"* by Ambassador Reyes himself.

1. The story utilizes, as a principle of organization, ideas relating to death and renewal, or rebirth. How does the author, as reflected in the behavior of Danding, see death? Indicate the process which culminates in Danding's renewal.

2. How would you define "sentiment"? Contrast it with "sentimentality." In this story, how does the author succeed in avoiding the latter while, at the same time, presenting a clear image of the former? Do you feel that the method used is personal and unique to the author? Have you noticed other writers employing the same method? Would you say it is a universal strategy, if not indeed the required tactic, for literary art?

3. Does the author, in your opinion, succeed in making Danding typical? Are the recollections of the Grandfather suggestive of experiences common to all? How does the author make us see the heritage of the Filipino people through Danding's experiences visiting with his kinsfolk?

4. The death of a kinsman in this story becomes the occasion for the birth of consciousness of a glorious past. The emotion aroused by this idea can either be ennobling or mawkish (See Question No. 2). In terms of specific details, explain how that awareness emerges and becomes part of Danding's emotion.

5. Compare "Native Land" with "How My Brother Leon Brought Home a Wife." Try to pinpoint specific similarities and differences. Do these help to explain how both Reyes and Arguilla regard such ideas as love of country, the force of tradition, family unity and the like? How would you express these ideas or concepts in Pilipino?

6. How much of contemporary Philippine society is reflected in this story? Do you feel that industrialization will have the effect of falsifying Danding's experience?

Why Had I Left Home?

Carlos Bulosan

This selection bearing the title "Why Had I Left Home?" is from Carlos Bulosan's *America is in the Heart*, writing which he had to draw largely from his personal experience. On occasion the book is referred to as an autobiography, which is perhaps what Bulosan had wished he had written. The book does contain several episodes worthy of inclusion in a collection of short stories — if by that term we mean narratives that are reasonably brief but highly self-contained and written in a richly meaningful way. This meaningfulness appears to have come to Carlos Bulosan as a gift; to have exploited it purposively could have struck him as pushing talent too hard. In any case, while Bulosan did not often sit down to write short stories he very often produced excellent samples of them. Two consecutive chapters from *America is in the Heart* comprise the selection given here.

1. Research on the features that distinguish a novel from a short story, an autobiography from an autobiographical novel, history from fiction, etc. How do autobiography and autobiographical fiction differ? In what ways are they similar? At this point in your familiarity with literary forms, how would you define the novel? The short story? Or, quite simply, the term "story?" Do these pages from Bulosan's work satisfy your definition?

2. The narrator speaks of America in connection with keywords and phrases such as "pilgrimage," "search for a door," and "beginning of your life," etc. List others that you find in the selection. List the images that appear to correspond to the narrator's concept of America. Make a list of keywords and phrases corresponding to what the narrator *SAW* in the America of his time. Using a map, trace the narrator's travels as described in the episodes.

3. Make a list of characters and try to group them into likes or opposites. For example, the kind ones may be matched with the cruel, the violent ones with the gentle, etc. Do you find characters for whom appropriate matches could not be found? Why, in your opinion, is this so?

4. How does the narrator regard his fellow immigrants in general? Trace the process he underwent and which justifies his attitude. Do you think that this attitude is justified by the circumstances described? If so, how? If not, explain as fully as you can. Would you call the narrator's attitude "ironic?" "romantic?" "naive?" Give reasons for your answer.

5. Describe the narrator's feelings about Nature as indicated in various scenes in the text. The last place mentioned in "Sunnyvale." Does this, in a way, help to remind you of the deck scene involving the steerage passengers at the beginning of the narrative?

6. Describe your feelings as you reach the concluding scenes of this selection. Do you feel you have "learned" something about America? About the narrator? Explain your answer as fully as possible.

Scent Of Apples

Bienvenido N. Santos

In "Scent of Apples," by Bienvenido N. Santos, we have an unforgettable portrait of the Filipino in America. It is amazing how in such a limited space, the author is able to bring to our attention a considerable amount of material. Through Fabia's memory, for example, we have a glimpse of the family life in the Philippines on which the immigrants from that country to the United States during, say, the early thirties, may have turned their back in pride and self-esteem. Whether fancied or real, this has resulted in the exile and nostalgia which is at center in "Scent of Apples". Thus, the story becomes poignant, although there is no apparent source of that poignancy. For explanation, the reader must search his own experience or knowledge of exile, war, and filial loyalty. The story can, in fact, be profitably understood in terms of these concepts.

1. An initial note must be made of the narrator. Can you describe him as a person? How are we to see his story — his own remembered past? or as a mere report of experiences? What are his attitudes toward his country, his countrymen and his own sojourn in America?

2. Contrast these attitudes with those of Fabia.

3. How do you characterize Ruth? What is suggested by her name? What is suggested by Roger's name? Are the details you find in the story consistent with these suggestions? Do you see Roger's future in terms of his father's past? Or, in terms of the narrator's present?

4. How does the author convey information about Fabia's past? Is the method direct or indirect? Is it effective?

5. What is implied by the abundance of the apples? By the hospital episode? By the "scent" of apples? In your opinion, what does the latter signify? Can that meaning stand for the rest of the story, including that which pertains to the narrator?

6. The story is one of initiation into the circumstances of alienation from home and country like that suffered by Fabia. Does the narrator himself learn anything from Fabia's case? In the process of retelling Fabia's story, is the narrator's awareness of home and country, and of the Filipino character, deepened or enriched? Explain your answer in a brief essay.

The Tomato Game

N. V. M. Gonzalez

While the main action in "The Tomato Game" involves a visit to a Stockton farm on a Sunday in summer, the story contains a good deal of historical and sociological material. The latter covers not only Filipino labor in the United States but economic and moral problems resulting from urban growth in crowded Philippine cities like Manila and Cebu. How these wide-ranging topics, like the beads of a necklace, are held together is understandable only after some study. This is a story that asks the reader to meet some of the responsibilities inherent in the task of reading, rather than respond passively to what passes for narrative.

1. What are the accepted and widely known facts about Filipino immigration to America? Write an account covering the circumstances surrounding the movement of workers and their families from the Philippines to the United States. Get first-hand human interest material from immigrants themselves.

2. Recount in your own words what happened to the old man (Lolo) in "The Tomato Game." Does his experience arouse your sympathy? Distinguish between "sympathy" and "pity." Which characters in "The Tomato Game" would you describe as "pitiful?" Which ones would, in your view, deserve the word "pitiable?"

3. Discuss the aspirations, or ambitions, of the various characters in the story. Are their lives, in your opinion, motivated by a commanding purpose or philosophy? How would you describe such a purpose or philosophy?

4. What is the advantage gained by the author in presenting Lolo's experience in epistolary form? What does this method of story-telling do to the details of time and place. To the details depicting character?

5. Who is really at the center of the story? In other words, in whom are we, as readers, truly interested? Is there a "story within a story" in the present structure? Explain.

6. How do you feel toward "Greg" who, supposedly, receives the letter? Explain the statement: " . . . here, Greg, is perhaps the message . . . " Compare "Greg" with the unnamed letter-writer. What ideas, if any, do they share?

How My Brother Leon Brought Home A Wife

Manuel E. Arguilla

Homecoming, in some cultures, is always disenchanting; but this is a theme Arguilla does not work with. He makes, as a matter of fact, an entirely different statement. It is when we are conscious of this different direction taken by the author that the story begins to yield its meaning. On discovering that meaning, we realize how Arguilla has taken considerable advantage of the convention of the love story.

1. From reliable sources, gather as much biographical information about Manuel E. Arguilla as you can. In what way is "How My Brother Leon . . ." autobiographical? What are the resources of autobiography? Should fiction be autobiographical?

2. From historical and socio-political sources, write about the Ilocano farmer. What are his most well-known traits? What are his most well-known attitudes toward education? Economic progress? Political life? Are these reflected in Arguilla's story? How?

3. Provide Maria with a background which, in your view, fits well with the other details in the story. Write a brief essay about her. If she were to pursue a profession, which one would that be? What work would suit her personality?

4. Imagine the scene when Leon sets out for the city to begin his college education. Write an imaginary dialogue suitable to the scene. Imagine Leon being interviewed by a reporter of his college paper on the occasion of his wedding and as he and Maria plan their return to his father's home. Write the interview in detail.

5. Suppose Maria were to write home to a friend about her arrival at Leon's barrio. What would she say? Compose one such letter. What impression would she try to convey?

6. Characterize Baldo. Discuss his relationship with each and every member of the family and with his friends amongst the neighbors in the village. Write an essay, or perhaps a narrative, entitled, for example, "How Baldo Left Home," or some such related subject. Determine beforehand what impression you will strive for.

Love In The Cornhusks

Aida Rivera Ford

Charles Angoff, whose anthology, *Modern Stories from Many Lands*, includes Aida Rivera Ford's story, has remarked that "Love in the Cornhusks" becomes "imbedded" in the reader's memory for some inexplicable reason. A careful and objective study of it may help us discover that appeal ourselves. Here are some pointers.

1. Do you get from this story a sense, as a reader, of how people live? Which of the following traditional elements of fiction — character, plot, atmosphere — contribute greatly to that impression?

2. A writer often adopts a particular tone of voice in conveying his sense of experience to the reader. Do you feel that Mrs. Rivera Ford has used such a technique? Describe that "tone?" Indicate which words and phrases make its use clear to the reader. Substitute other words and phrases for those used and observe the result. In this connection, how useful is the picturesque language of Amado's letter? Besides sounding authentic, what else does it achieve?

4. Distinguish between Tinang and Amado as regards their respective attitudes toward the Señora and the Señor. Is there a connection here with the fact that, according to Tito, Tinang's baby has "big ears?"

5. How do you explain Tinang's behavior at the store when she received her letter? How do you justify the terror she felt at sight of the "slithering" snake? Contrast and compare the snake with the big dogs and the little mongrel we meet at the beginning of the story.

Three Pieces of Bread

Roman A. de la Cruz

In what appears to be the idiom of a young boy, "Three Pieces of Bread" defines the nature and range of charity among the less fortunate in society. The causes of poverty are not pointed out in the story, nor are the exact needs of the poor; those would be concerns that belong properly to sociology. What the story deals with is the enduring relationship amongst people which time and economic circumstances can do nothing to diminish: each one of us is rich in our own way. The reader will do well to estimate the "wealth" which each of the characters in the story may claim to have. This is, however, the narrator's story, his discovery of one's need for generosity and/or family itself.

1. What is the over-all impression that the plight of the three orphans gives? Discuss the causes, immediate as well as remote, which may have brought them to that state.

2. Compare the orphans to the brothers — Baldo and the narrator. Are these two in a better economic situation than the orphans? What advantages in particular do they enjoy? How do they stand in the community? Does the narrator realize their good fortune?

3. Characterize the narrator. How far removed is he from the events he describes? Does the narrator understand their cause?

4. What do the three pieces of bread signify? Evaluate the mother's gesture. Is it an afterthought? Is her generosity adequate? Is her holding back understandable?

5. Discuss the language which the narrator used in telling his story. Is it natural under the circumstances? Would you have wished the language to be different? Would another idiom do harm to the story?

The Prisoner

Rogelio R. Sikat

In the short story, the writer tries to express as much meaning as possible in the least number of words. When he succeeds, the reader attains a fullness of understanding of subject and theme quite out of proportion to the skimpiness of the narrative. It is for this reason that the images in a story are designed to serve in as many ways as possible, each one supportive of the writer's artistic purpose. Rogelio R. Sikat, in "The Prisoner," is compelled to make his town characters, his farmers, and his young people, the farm boy and Tata Selo's daughter, give us the utmost in resonance. His main character, Tata Selo, must likewise evoke a large significance. The following questions may help direct our search for the total body of meaning which "The Prisoner" contains.

1. Describe Tata Selo's efforts to justify the crime he committed? What is the effect of the repetitive nature of his statements? Do you see any special significance in the sequence of characters that Tata Selo spoke to?

2. What does the story suggest concerning the relationship between the *kabesa* and the town officials? Does the story appear to condemn or approve of this relationship?

3. Describe the attitude of the townsfolk toward Tata Selo. How does the author make this credible?

4. What is the reason for Tata Selo's request that Saling be taken away from the *presidente's* house? Why should it be the farm boy who is asked to do this? Do you feel that Saling has a mind of her own? Could she have improved her lot? How? What is suggested by her being described as "sick?"

5. Evaluate the author's understanding of the social situation described in his story. Does he provide a solution to the problems he has observed? Do you feel that he should? Which other story in this anthology presents us with the same problem?

The Stuff Of Heroes

J. Eddie Infante

There is an interesting distinction between history and fiction that both readers and writers often overlook. The latter could use historical events as material for fiction and may fail to make his work believable. The historian could adopt the methods of fiction, making his work all too credible, but then only at the risk of making his history "untrue." What is true, then, as fiction may not be true as history, and vice-versa. Fictional events are simply quite different from historical events.

1. Evaluate the author's use of such words and phrases as "bear hug," "rigid budgeting," "in the heavens," "to scratch for centavos." How do they function to give authenticity to the story? Do you think they are appropriately used? How helpful are they in contributing to your understanding of the events?

2. What does the encounter with the two boys mean? At the end of the story, Antonio is described as worried about where to get his next meal. Does this strike you as symbolic? Do you think this symbolism is intended? Is it all the more rich, considering that the girl is named "Felicidad?"

3. To establish authenticity, the author invites us to recall familiar events in Philippine history. Verify these events by checking with a standard work on the subject. Compare your findings with the impressions you get through reading "The Stuff for Heroes."

4. In what manner is the story told? How close to his character does the author get? Can you distinguish between him and that of a persona that he uses as a story-telling voice? Indicate the places in the story where this feature can be clearly noted by a careful reader.

5. Would you say that the story deals with a contemporary subject? Explain your answer by referring to precise details in the story and their counterparts in day-to-day life as you have seen it reported in the news or in other reliable sources. Contrast the credibility of historical with fictional accounts. What is your preference?

A Pilgrim Yankee's Progress

Nick Joaquin

With a stunning wealth of detail, rendered with an unfaltering control of dramatic values, Nick Joaquin presents an analysis of what passes for hospitality — Filipino hospitality, if you like — and the masks and disguises in human relationships in upper middle class Philippine society. This particularity does not limit the densely written, "A Pilgrim Yankee's Progress," which is actually remarkably simple in structure. An appreciation of this feature prevents the reader from missing the subject the author deals with. Care must also be taken in observing the changes of mood between the characters, as well as the effect of history, presented here in terms of three wars, on their lives. It must be borne in mind that "A Pilgrim Yankee's Progress" escapes the conventions of the short story as a structure of discovery or initiation, and must be read accordingly.

1. Explain the last paragraph in Newman's last letter to his mother. Is this story about him? If so, how do you account for the successive changes in focus? Do you see a pattern in those shifts?

2. Can you divide the story into distinct parts? What purpose is served by each? Who dominates each section? Group the parts so that you have the least number of them to account for. What do these parts represent in terms of the author's subject and theme?

3. Explain the discovery that Doña Concha makes toward the end of the story. What does she mean by "all human intercourse was an infection?" How is this idea related to the family history of the Newmans? To that of Doña Concha's family?

4. Do you feel that young Newman is justified in his charge that Pepang Camacho had been "waiting all afternoon" for him "to love" her up? What ironic details heighten emotion at this point? Locate similar ironies involving the other characters that underscore and further define the theme of human relationship as an affliction.

5. Does the author provide, along with those ironic details, comic material as well? Identify these one by one. What significance do you attribute to the portrait of young Newman's mother?

6. How much of typical America do you see in the story? How much of typical Manila? The story recovers a marvelous amount of historical and socio-political detail. Drawing from these, write an essay on such topics as "Manila After Liberation," "Occupied Manila," "Natives and Strangers," etc.

A Summer In An Alaskan Salmon Cannery

J. C. Dionisio

To the casual reader, "A Summer in an Alaskan Salmon Cannery" may be a difficult story to study as an example of the genre. This arises from the structure which the author adopted. The three episodes that the writer has put under one title could be read and enjoyed independently. All three episodes, however, are intended to create a unified effect — if the form of the short story is to be attained. The question is, do these episodes achieve that result? To discover how this comes off is a critical exercise of first importance. These questions are intended to assist the reader in undergoing that critical experience.

1. The first step to take is to see clearly how each episode is told. Who narrates the first episode? the second? the third? Identify, with a phrase or two, what each episode is concerned with.

2. How would you define a short story? How important is the concept of a unified effect? How does "A Summer . . ." achieve this effect?

3. Describe the narrator, using whatever you can derive from the first episode which would help you project your perception of this person clearly. Are the second and third episodes told by the same person? Do you feel that his awareness to certain relationships amongst his friends is constantly being tried or tested? What are the values that seem to hold these relationships together? Are these values being constantly challenged?

4. Do you feel that each episode should have been more directly related to the one that follows it? As they stand, what establishes their interrelationship?

5. On what abstract idea, in your opinion, is the story focused? What does the author present as contrasting elements to this idea? Is the narrator a changed person at the end of the third episode?

6. Relate in your own words the experience that the narrator recovers from memory. How much time has passed between the events described and the narrator's attempt to set them down in writing? In what ways does this time lag affect the three narratives? Can you now conceive the three narratives as building towards and becoming a unified whole? How?

People In The War

Gilda Cordero-Fernando

In an "Introduction" that he provided for Gilda Cordero-Fernando's collection of short stories, *The Butcher, the Baker, the Candlestick Maker,* (Manila, 1962), N.V.M. Gonzalez wrote: "The reader is not likely to put this collection away without a favorite story or two to remember the experience by. My own favorite is 'People in the War,' a story which puts its subject at a distance and wins our assent completely." It is a rather casual sounding remark that, more than a decade later, might nonetheless stand some scrutiny. What is meant, for example, by a story putting "its subject at a distance?" Is there to be discovered here the method which achieves that effect? Who are the "people" indicated in the title? If we are to feel detached from them, how does the author hope to make us familiar with them, nay, even feel compassionate towards them? A systematic understanding of "People in the War" should obviously provide us with some answers to these questions. Those that follow indicate the direction that our study could take.

1. "The moon rose bright and clear, like the promise of another time . . ." is one of the most striking images at the end of this story. How does it compare with the remark of Victoria's father: "Let's go ahead then . . . She'll catch up with us . . . ?"

2. Research on the topic, "Situational Ethics." Who are the proponents of this concept? In what way is it atheistic? Is Lina's action justified? How would you characterize such a person? How can you account for Lina's character developing in the direction that it did? In what ways does the author make her credible?

3. It is important to see this story in historical perspective. Which character is at center of the action? How reliable or dependable are the perceptions of this character? In this respect, did the author choose well in using this character for the purpose intended?

4. Does this character experience a revelation or a discovery as the narrative ends? Can you evaluate this experience while keeping in the foreground the larger experience of living in Japanese occupied Manila and surviving the battle for the liberation of Manila? What do you now understand of the role of the writer in regard to private as well as public events?

5. Make a list of the various people in the story and classify them in relation to the insight you have gained about the central character. How does the author use individuals? What function is given to families?

6. Read in an encyclopedia or history book an account of the battle for the liberation of the city of Manila. Compare the information you have gained from this source with what you have just learned from "People in the War." Which is likely to have a lasting impression on you? Why?

7. Evaluate the friendship between Victoria and Nonong. What effect is achieved by the author in presenting this romantic element in a low key?

The Bomb

E. P. Patanñe

A journalist and prolific writer on Philippine anthropological topics, E. P. Patanñe contributes to this anthology something quite new in his arsenal — an artistic and thoroughly achieved reading of "the new poor" in the Philippines, i.e., the poverty under the aegis of post World War II reconstruction programs and development economics. It is a condition not monopolized by this country nor by others; it is the lot of millions all over the world. The aspirations of those millions is in Peles' preoccupation over improving his share of the world's goods. Understood symbolically, what obsesses Peles and draws both his wife Erlin and their three little boys away from the relatively safe but deprived household, is nowhere described in the story; but it never quite leaves the awareness of the reader.

1. Discuss how the authorial voice renders the setting of the story. What specific contrasts does the author establish between man and nature, between past and present?

2. "She is tough," says the old man as he and Peles work carefully at dismantling the bomb. Do you consider the use of the pronoun "she" significant? What bearing does this have on Patanñe's subject?

3. How does the author regard the facts of history? Do you feel that he is making a statement about war in particular, or about the condition of people after an experience of war?

4. Describe Erlin as housewife and mother. Would you characterize her attitude toward Peles and his plans as typical of a woman in her circumstances? Can you explain this attitude? What, in your opinion, brought about a change in her attitude? In this connection, what contribution do each of the other characters make?

5. Did Peles recognize the change in Erlin, and did he approve of it? Evaluate the concluding scene as to its inevitability.

6. Was it right for Peles and Erlin to become involved together in the venture with which the action of the story ends? Was Erlin right in having the three little boys join them?

7. "But the woman and the three boys went grimly on with their work." This is the statement with which the story ends. What is suggested by the precision and economy that the author employs?

The Old Well

Andres Cristobal Cruz

In the image of an old village well, Andres Cristobal Cruz has found a metaphor for regressive forces in society. He uses what may be described as a communal viewpoint (others have used the term "choral") to underscore the pervasiveness of the situation presented; by keeping his distance from his subject, the latter is revealed to us with seeming artlessness. The force of this image can be evaluated more fully after the reader has answered some of the questions that follow.

1. Can you summarize this story in one sentence? Does it follow a pattern of discovery or of initiation? Explain.

2. Describe the community which the author presents. In relation to their use of the water from the old well, how would you group the members of the community? Delineate the structure of dependence which one group has upon the other. Do you see this justified in economic or moral terms?

3. How significant is the repetition, at the opening of the story, of the phrase "It is said . . . ?" Whose "voice" is heard throughout the story? How close do we get to the events in Tibag? How do we get to know about the conditions related to job-seeking in Manila? Contrast the tempo of life in the village with that in the city.

4. Do you consider Narsing's meeting with the Chinese gardener significant? Describe Narsing's effort to improve his lot, and that of his family. What, in your view, is hinted by Narsing's interest in *Florante at Laura*?

5. Do you consider believable the accident that Narsing's father had? How about Narsing's becoming "heir" to the occupation of *aguador*? The author speaks of a bamboo yoke used for carrying water; how accurate, in your opinion, is this image? There is mention also of Narsing's father, "who looked like Christ." Evaluate the significance of this image as well.

6. How typical is the situation depicted in the story? Do you consider the presentation biased or unbiased? Note the references made to America; how do you evaluate the suggestions implied?

Zita

Arturo B. Rotor

The conflict between City and Country is a theme in Philippine literature that was among the first to be exploited by writers of the short story in English. Their newly acquired command of both language and form may have contributed to the popularity of the theme, to the detriment of a more questioning and analytical reading of the issues affecting the social and economic life of the nation. As may be seen in "Zita," a decisive confrontation between the values of the city and those of the country seems to be always emerging, only to be defused by growth as a romantic, perhaps even a sentimental idea. This appears to be what the girl Zita is an embodiment of. Until that tension finds a more dramatic expression, she will continue to remind us of this weakness in the Filipino character. "Zita" by Arturo B. Rotor remains, however, an engaging rendering of a romantic attitude that conceals that weakness and even dissipates that tension.

1. Define the author's tone, or his emotional attitude toward the story. Which words or phrases prove your impression to be the correct one? Is this tone consistent throughout the story? Differentiate tone from mood, or the emotional relationship between one character and another. Does the mood change? Illustrate.

2. Which of the characters in the story has been chosen as the character in focus? What do you infer from this? Divide the story into parts and check whether the character in focus receives our full attention, in a progressive fashion.

3. To what level of society does Mr. Reteche belong? Is the word "exile" suited to his state of mind? What do you infer by the acceptance in the village of that attribute as characteristic of Mr. Reteche? What does he represent in terms of the conflict between one level of society and another? Does the school play a part in this conflict? What role does Nature offer?

4. How do we see Zita at the beginning of the story? Discuss step by step the proces of her education. Does she, in your opinion, attain a certain degree of maturity? Did she choose to grow in that direction, or was this direction predetermined? By whom? Why? Do you feel that the author approves of this process and direction of growth? Discuss your answer fully.

5. How does Zita regard Mr. Reteche at the end of the story? Do you note the change in her attitude toward him? Evaluate this change. Is this change, in your view, for the better or for the worse?

6. Is Zita a typical character? Discuss the social forces that contribute to her personality.

Wedding Dance

Amador T. Daguio

At whatever level of social order man may be, he tends to give value to continuity and, to this end, is aided by traditional beliefs and practices that in themselves were evolved out of the same transcendental need. In Amador T. Daguio's "Wedding Dance," we are being asked to contemplate this thought, the invitation being in the form, as one critic has written, of "a heartwarming incident in the lives of the non-Christian Kalinga tribes." The focus on the wedding dance becomes also the occasion for a portrait of an archetypal sacrificial victim, as demanded by society. The author, however, reveals the hidden union between victim and the ever-fertile Nature, so that in the end we see the former as one with the latter. Nature and Man strike a balance involving an expanse of emotion that appears justified. The careful reader should have no difficulty in identifying the images which Daguio uses to bring these ideas off.

1. What forces compelled Awiyao to leave Lumnay and marry Madulimay? Do these forces shape people's character? Do they determine their way of life? Make a listing of these forces and rank their power over men and their ways.

2. Do you see Lumnay as a sacrificial victim? How would you describe her recognition of and attitude toward her destiny? In Lumnay's being left with the beads, is the author suggesting a transcendental relationship? Describe those beads in your own words. What do they mean for Lumnay? What do they mean to you, the reader?

3. Lumnay was almost at the point of joining the wedding dance. What could have happened then? Why did her courage fail her? Discuss the role women play in the social order described in the story.

4. Is the author right in equating Lumnay and marriage with Awiyao and the field they had planted to beans? What bias does the author show?

5. Make a chronological list of the events mentioned in the story. Compare your list with the sequence of events in the story. What, in your opinion, prompted the author not to follow the natural sequence of events? What is achieved by our seeing the story in Lumnay's terms?

Ceremony

J. C. Tuvera

Before joining the government service as a member of the Cabinet of President Ferdinand Marcos, of the Republic of the Philippines, Juan C. Tuvera worked as a journalist and editor. "Ceremony" was the first prize-winning story in English in the 1954-55 Carlos Palanca Memorial for Literature awards. Gene Z. Hanrahan, editor of *Fifty Great Oriental Stories* (Bantam, 1965) has remarked: "Many Asian authors today openly recognize a real need for a new outlook and a new literature. One very promising approach can be found in several recent works that temper the subtle Oriental traditions with the concrete realities of the modern world." "Ceremony" may indeed be studied extensively in the light of this observation.

1. What, in your opinion, does Pablo's song mean for each of the characters in the story? Do these meanings, in sum, define for you an impression of what "Ceremony" is all about? How else could you have entitled the story?

2. Why does Junior say, "And Apo Caddi . . . I wish I could hurt her?" Why should the Apo seem so invulnerable? At this point in the story we are made aware of Junior's desire to "count all the untold ills." Which ones would you consider the "told," and which the "untold" ills? Does the story as a whole "reveal" rather than "tell about" them?

3. Elisa and Junior appear to share what amounts to a vision of what life ought to be like. Describe their expectations. Which images bear them out? What role does the mother play in making that vision all too impossible to fulfill? Is she really accountable or blameworthy?

4. Can you think of an aphorism or proverb — you may, in fact, try making one — to sum up your reading of the story? Does it suggest a riddle? If Junior were to tell the story in his own words, what would he leave out? Which part of the story would he elaborate on?

5. As in "How My Brother Leon Brought Home a Wife" we find once again that song is a crucial detail in the story. How do you explain this?

What Shall We Do When We All Go Out?

Gregorio C. Brillantes

The idea of a lost Eden is a familiar one in the literature of countries, like the Philippines, that have had an experience under colonialism. This story by Gregorio C. Brillantes presents an aspect of that idea; he renders it in terms of a boy's loss of innocence. An awareness of death, on one hand, and, on the other, an entrapment by forces of evil, are encompassed by the story. The author sets the events in a typical provincial town, with the schoolhouse serving as a literal, as well as symbolic, center. The learning process to which the narrator is subjected is conveyed to the reader in a mode borrowed from that of confession or memoir. This gives the recovered experience a considerable moral as well as historical dimension.

1. Are there details in the story which might enable you to place the events in Philippine history? The "*convento,*" for example, takes one back to the Spanish regime. How about the municipal hall with a tile roof? The use of names like "Vic" and "Junior?" Explain your answer as fully as possible, using specific public events to support your opinion. How old, in your view, is the persona that the author uses? (You will note, of course, that the story is told by the protagonist some years after the events described.) What advantage is gained through the use of his tone? Do you feel that the persona is all too familiar with the problem described in the narrative?

2. Divide the narrative into parts. At which point does the idea of death appear? At which point is the small-time protection racket operated by Dado hinted initially? What is suggested to the reader by this progression of events?

3. Characterize the narrator. Can you describe his family background? Can you distinguish him from the boy he describes? What opinion does he have of the town he remembers? Compare this to the impression that you have of the town where "the-boy-he-had-been" or "the boy trying to match his father's stride" once lived.

4. Are his classmates typical? What do you think about Miss Castillo? As a character in the story? Do you see any meaning in Jaime dying so young?

5. "Remember to smile," says the boy's mother on seeing the class picture in which the narrator is shown with his face tense and wearing an "almost belligerent look." Details like this can hold great meaning. Point out others. Does the narrative in itself suggest a portrait of a town, of a period in the history of society? How contemporary is

the image that the story leaves in your mind?

6. The title comes from a song that was popular with Philippine school-children in the 'twenties.' Would anyone in your circle of relatives and friends (or would your own parents, for example) remember the tune? Compare Brillantes' use of song with Arguilla's in, for example, "How My Brother Leon Brought Home a Wife." Refer to the critical discussion on the latter elsewhere in this book.

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